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I collected my lovely boat Betty today. The service has been exceptional, polite and very knowledgeable. I would recommend Narrowboats Ltd to anyone thinking of purchasing a boat, they really went the extra mile.

ANGELA

When I decided I wished to own a narrowboat I was a complete novice. I had no idea where to buy one. Someone, canal side, suggested Narrowboats Ltd. I walked into their office as a complete stranger and bluntly stated that I wished to own a boat. Immediately I was put at ease by Liam's professional dialogue, carefully explaining the process. 12 months later I am the proud owner of a brand new, truly beautiful 55 Footer. Many thanks to all of you for your professionalism

BARRY

I sadly had to sell my boat Roma as I could no longer do the maintenance needed. Liam was so helpful; a credit to the company, he and Geoff kept me informed regularly till she was sold. What's even better, her new owners love her as much as I did! It was great meeting them, thank you all so much.

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For everyone who enjoys the waterways

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WELCOME

I like a good pint, and if it's by the water's edge, that makes it taste even better. But we at *CB* also know that many pubs have had a bit of a time of it over the last few years with some facing an uphill struggle to keep their beer on tap and doors open.

Which is why we launched the *Canal Boat* Pub Of The Year Awards last year. With your help we wanted to show that there are some great waterside pubs out there and reward those who do that bit extra for boaters. You can see who won and why on Page 54.

I've just had the pleasure of travelling to them to present them with their *Canal Boat* Pub Of The Year plaques, which you might think was a good excuse to nip out for a crafty pint (yes, it was a beautiful spring day and the sun was shining) but it also gave me a

chance to find out what made the winner and two runners-up that bit special in your eyes.

The response to our Awards was so good we're going to do it again for 2016 so, later in the year, we'll be calling for your nominations for your favourite pubs.

In the meantime, we hope you'll support all of the waterside pubs on your cruises this year; remember the old saying, if we don't use them we could lose them – and we hope you'll have many a happy pint (okay and a pie) on your travels.

NICK
NICK WALL
Editor

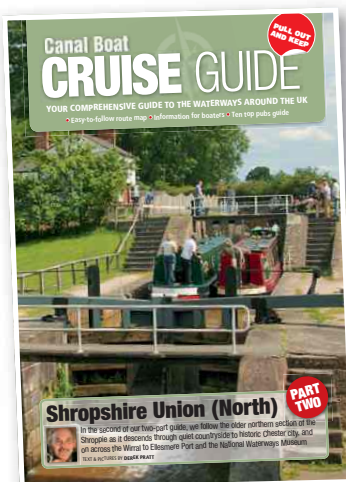


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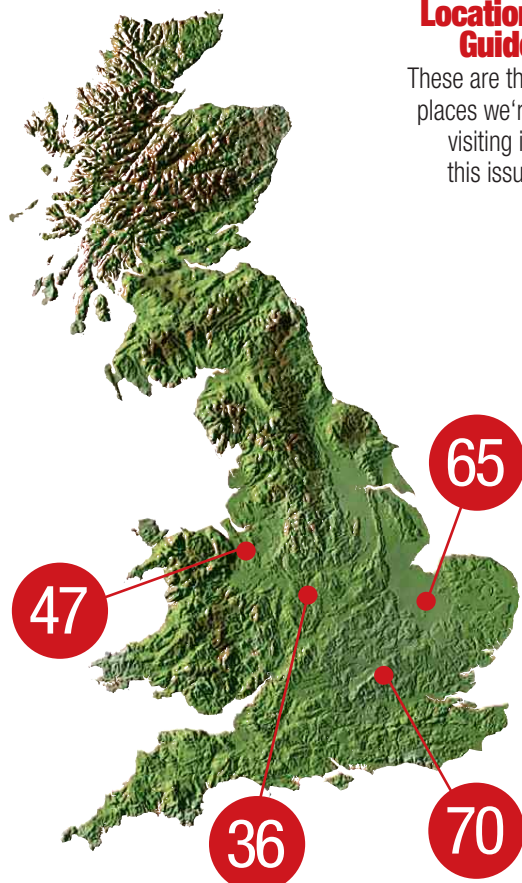
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Christleton on the northern Shropshire Union, which features in this month's cruise guide

Picture by Derek Pratt



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Floods: re-openings on the way



THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT lengths of the waterways which suffered major damage in the Boxing Day floods are on track to open by Easter – but it will be summer at the earliest before all routes are navigable again.

The main routes hit by the breaches, bridge damage, towpath washouts, cutting slips, canal wall damage and heavy silting were the Rochdale Canal, Calder & Hebble Navigation and Aire & Calder Navigation.

Following the start of dredging and repair work, CRT is 'confident' that an eight-mile isolated length from Hebden Bridge on the Rochdale via the junction at Sowerby Bridge to Salterhebble on the Calder & Hebble will

re-open by Easter. On the Rochdale Canal heading further west, another three miles of dredging should see it open to Lock 15 by early May. Beyond there, it gets more difficult with a major landslip into the canal and a breach.

The first of these is the more complex, with movement still happening, a third-party landowner and a householder involved, which means that all that can be said about timescales is that it will take 'several months'. The breach is more straightforward with design work done and discussions underway with engineering contractors Kier.

Meanwhile, a great effort by local volunteers (shown right) has meant that the towpath has been repaired from Sowerby Bridge to Hebden Bridge, with the teams continuing towards Lock 15.

Reopening the Calder & Hebble Navigation eastwards will come up against the two major problems, both Elland and Crowther bridges need replacing. Crowther is the more straightforward, while Elland is a listed structure carrying no fewer than 29 service ducts containing various cables, pipes and fibre optics.

A temporary footbridge (pictured left) and service bridge have been built so that the services can be diverted allowing demolition to take place around May. Approval from heritage bodies has been given for a new structure using prefabricated concrete arches re-faced



with the original stone. Enough of it should be complete for a target re-opening to boats in early summer.

Further east, the main issues are a scour at Figure of Three and an embankment slip at Kirklees, both of which are straightforward and should be complete by June; it may well be that Wakefield to the Huddersfield Canal is the first through-route to open. Here, too, volunteers have been at work clearing mud and debris from towpaths.

On the Aire & Calder, dredging at Leeds is underway, a temporary dam has replaced the washed-out weir and the hope is that the closed length from Leeds to Knostrop will open for Easter, with the permanent new structures able to be completed with the waterway generally open to boats.

Finally as we went to press, the Yorkshire Ouse remained closed as water levels had yet to return to normal.

See canalrivertrust.org.uk for updates, to volunteer and support the fund-raising appeal.

Flooding hits the Thames too

IT WASN'T JUST the North where the waterways were affected by floods during the winter. This is one of two boats which came adrift on the River Thames at Oxford in early February.

The first boat was recovered, but narrowboat *One Old Peculier* crashed into Botley Bridge,

causing an obstruction. The Environment Agency tried pumping water and towing it but, when that didn't work, a crane was brought in to winch it out.

The owner, an Aspergers sufferer, has been overwhelmed by donations towards repairs, including an anonymous pledge of £25,000.



The locking 'league table'

IF YOU LIKE seeing plenty of other boats about, head for the heart of the narrow canal network; if you like it quiet, the Pennine routes might be more to your taste (at least once they've re-opened after the floods) – according to latest

statistics for lock usage.

The annual lockage report has a serious purpose – helping the Canal & River Trust to keep an eye on patterns of use and predict where water might run short.

The overall total for the network is

down 0.75 percent from 2014, but a steeper reduction in the Central Shires, North Wales & Borders and North-East is largely balanced by rises in the South Wales & Severn and Kennet & Avon.

Of the 177 locks monitored, all but one of the top 15 are on the Oxford, Llangollen, Trent & Mersey or Shropshire Union.

The full list is on canalrivertrust.org.uk.

LOCK OPERATIONS PER YEAR

The top five

- 1 Hillmorton 9,109
- 2 New Marton 8,779
- 3 Colwich 8,348
- 4 Cholmondeston 7,850
- 5 Wardle 7,282



Going underground...

IF YOU'D BEEN at the west portal of Standedge Tunnel in early February, you might just have spotted this unlikely looking contraption reversing into the darkness. Known as a 'Truxor', it's a kind of amphibious tractor that had been brought in specially to clear a blockage of silt about 250 metres in from the Diggle end of Britain's longest and highest canal tunnel.

The machine's hydraulic bucket was used to clear silt which had been brought down into the tunnel by the heavy rain falling on the Pennines. "Not only have we had to bring in specialist equipment, we've had to take specialist advice from a mining consultant who is experienced in confined spaces to make sure the work is undertaken in a safe and efficient way," said Project manager Mark Weatherall.

The completion of the work means that the tunnel can open to through-navigation and to the regular passenger trips on 19 March as planned.

United approach to derail HS2's impact

THE IMPACT ON the canals by the first phase of the proposed HS2 railway could be further reduced. The Inland Waterways Association and the Canal & River Trust have combined efforts to try to wrest further concessions from the Select Committee dealing with the Parliamentary Bill for the proposed high-speed line.

The route near Fradley Junction has already been altered, with three of four proposed viaducts over the Coventry and Trent & Mersey canals designed out – but at the expense of a main road being diverted to run alongside the canal. Both IWA and CRT would like to change that, and also want a less obtrusive design of bridge over the Birmingham & Fazeley at Curdworth.

The Bill is expected to be passed by the end of this year, with construction beginning in 2017. Meanwhile, waterways supporters will continue their efforts to influence plans for the second phase of the route where it runs from the Midlands to Yorkshire – threatening the Ashby, Chesterfield and Dearne & Dove restoration plans.

Thames moorer loses battle

RIVER THAMES

A BOATER WHO claimed that his human rights were breached by a council bylaw banning mooring on the Thames in West London has lost his case – and been fined £720.

As reported in *CB* May 2015, Richmond Borough Council passed a bylaw banning mooring without permission on riverbanks in its ownership. Until then, these lengths had been home to a number of residential boaters who had been able to moor without charge or licence (because it comes under the jurisdiction of the Port of London Authority) and without any equivalent of the Canal & River Trust's requirement for boats to move on every fortnight.

Some of the moorers said they had

been there for several years and the bylaw would leave them nowhere else to go.

During the following months, boat owner Christopher Akerman left his boat at Ham Lands and ignored four warnings of action from the Council and police. When the case came to court he claimed that the bylaw breached his right to family life and would make him homeless. Wimbledon Magistrates' Court disagreed, and fined him £720.

The verdict was welcomed by Councillor Tony Arbour, who added that he hoped that similar judgements would also be made against other boaters who have tied their craft to poles driven into the river bed and are claiming that they are, therefore, not 'moored'.



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First 'indie' for share show

A FIRST FOR this year's National Boat Share Show at Braunston will be a boat on display that isn't part of any of the organised boat share schemes.

Tess, a six-berth 55ft trad stern narrowboat with a one-sixth share on offer at £5,500, is the first self-managed shared ownership boat ever to attend the show. It joins the other ten boats already

booked in representing all three main boat share management companies – BCBM, Carefree Cruising and Ownashare – with the show's organisers confident of the number rising to at least 20 boats by the time the event takes place on 23-24 April. Two brand new boats are due to be launched.

Andrew Cooley of independent website boatshare4u.co.uk which supports the show pointed out that over 30 shares changed hands at last year's show, representing "a significant proportion of the 200 or so shares we know to be on offer at the moment".

CRT defends property in sale row

BCN

THE CANAL & RIVER TRUST has defended the decision of its jointly owned property development partnership ISIS Waterside Regeneration LLP to offer canalside property at Birmingham's Warwick Bar for sale to potential developers, after complaints from tenants that the sale was being done without their knowledge and CRT was 'unethically' bypassing charities legislation in doing so.

The 21 small businesses currently rent their premises (in old industrial buildings in a conservation area by the Digbeth Branch of the Birmingham & Fazeley) on short leases from ISIS, which in turn holds a long lease from

freeholder CRT. It is this long lease that is being offered for sale: the new owner will decide whether and for how long those short leases are renewed; some tenants are worried they will be 'off site within six months'.

A CRT spokesman told *CB* that it was not for the Trust to decide if the property is sold, or who it is sold to and for what sum; it was a matter for ISIS and the decision would be made in the best interests of ISIS to generate income for its owners – including CRT. He added that the property had always been regarded as a development site, that it was only the economic downturn which had prevented it happening some years ago and the space let out on short leases while the economy recovered.

Heroes' help for canals

A PROJECT WHICH combines restoring canals with rebuilding the lives of injured servicemen and women has been backed by £500,000 from the People's Postcode Lottery (PPL).

Heritage Heroes, put together by the Canal & River Trust and Help for Heroes, was picked by PPL as the winner of its Dream Fund – which "gives organisations the opportunity to work on projects they can only dream of". In this case, it will involve military veterans

gaining skills by working on six waterway restoration projects around the country. The initiative will be supported by the Waterway Recovery Group which has offered places on its canal camps and advised CRT on setting up its own volunteer camps.

Help for Heroes' Susan Turnbull explained that: "Leaving the military and finding a new direction can be daunting especially for those who are living with life-changing injuries," but that this project would "help develop new skills that will set them on the path for a new and purposeful career".

We hope to bring you the list of full canal projects supported in the next issue, but we understand that it is not limited to CRT waterways.

TOWPATH TELEGRAPH

BWML APOLOGY FOR SLUR

British Waterways Marinas Ltd at Bath Marina has apologised after posting notices to 'be aware that we have travellers in the park and ride' and 'report any suspicious behaviour'. Following complaints to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission about the "offensive" and "discriminatory" signs, CRT subsidiary BWML "apologised unreservedly" and accepted that "lessons must be learned".

EREWASH TOWPATH UPGRADE

A £500,000 project to improve a one-mile stretch of the Erewash Canal's towpath, from Potters Lock to Awsworth Road Bridge, is expected to be completed by April. The works will involve strengthening the canal bank and installing a new wider, smoother path more accessible to walkers, cyclists, boaters, people in wheelchairs and buggies. It follows work on the five miles from Long Eaton to Hallam Fields. Funding came from Derbyshire County Council and the Canal & River Trust.

IS NARROWBOATING FOR ME?

Never steered a narrowboat? The Friends of Truman Enterprise Narrowboat Trust is again offering a Have-a-Go cruise under expert guidance from its base at Hatherton Marina on the Staffs & Worcs. Held on Saturday 16 April, it costs £20 per person. Contact Keith Eley on 0121 777 7737.

CANAL HISTORY RESEARCHER

Dr Jodie Matthews, from the University of Huddersfield, has been appointed as the Canal & River Trust's first ever Honorary Research Fellow. She will work with the Trust's museums and archives to promote greater public appreciation, new research and understanding of the importance of Britain's waterways. She has begun to establish a new Canal Research Network, bringing academics, heritage professionals and enthusiasts together to talk about new approaches to exploring waterways history and research.



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Thames lock safety reprieve

RIVER THAMES

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY has scrapped plans to remove fire extinguishers and portable rescue ladders from its locks on the Thames, following protests from the National Association of Boat Owners.

The Agency had earlier defended its decision, saying that lock-keepers were not trained to use the fire extinguishers, and that having consulted with "experts in water safety and rescue", it had been advised that it was "better and safer to have equipment to assist a casualty while access is made to the lock steps" than to use the portable ladders.

However, at the Thames Navigation User Forums meeting in January EA Waterways Manager



Andrew Graham said that, following an exercise to investigate lock issues, it had decided to replace the ladders with lighter ones and make "little change" to its fire extinguisher practice.

Third boat financier to fill the gap

A THIRD FINANCE company has stepped into the gap left when RoyScot Larch withdrew from the marine sector last year, with the launch of Arkle Finance Ltd's Marine Finance Service for new and used inland and seagoing craft.

Rob Carr, who has over 30 years of experience in yacht production and boat brokerage in the UK and

abroad, has been recruited to head the new team, which Arkle says offers a "personalised approach to funding a variety of boats costing from as little as £25,000 to £500,000". The company provides marine mortgages using Part 3 registrations on the Small Ships Register.

The company will be exhibiting at the Crick Boat Show in May.

New ten-year plan for Monty

MONTGOMERY CANAL

KEEN TO SEE more progress on the Montgomery Canal restoration over the next decade, Welshpool Town Council has taken the lead in getting interested groups together to agree a 'single plan' for the canal.

A steering group has been set up with representatives

of the Montgomery Waterway Restoration Group plus representatives of the local MP and Welsh Government member, and has published a draft Re-opening Plan.

The Plan concentrates on the seven-mile 'missing link' between the restored lengths in England and Wales, which, if re-opened, would create a 26-mile continuous navigable route from the Llangollen at Frankton through Welshpool to Refail. The work needed to reopen it is split into five stages, with the costs estimated:

- Morton to Llanymynech £5m
- Llanymynech to Wern £1.1m
- Wern to Four Crosses £3.3m
- Four Crosses to Arddleen £3.75m
- Arddleen main road crossing £1.6m

Adding in other works including bank protection, dredging, land acquisition, nature reserves, studies and towpath work brings it to a total of £30m – but it is believed more use of volunteers could significantly cut this.

Following the consultation, it is planned to take the agreed plan forward so that a tourism case, business plan and feasibility studies can be completed and put forward to the Welsh and Westminster governments and other potential funders – with a ten-year target for opening.

Meanwhile, at the far end of the canal, there has been renewed interest in extending restoration through from Refail to Newtown, with Newtown's Town Council affirming its support and agreeing to work with other groups.



TOWPATH TELEGRAPH

POLICE CADETS OUT IN FORCE

A team of Volunteer Police Cadets headed to Hinckley in January to crack down on graffiti and make the Ashby Canal a more attractive place.

The cadets, from Leicestershire Police, are working with the Canal & River Trust, and targeted Dodwells Road Bridge.



The group, aged between 13 and 18 years, painted over graffiti, removed litter and tackled overhanging weeds and greenery. VPCs help to encourage people of their own age to participate positively in communities. "This is a prime example of the effort VPCs put in to make a difference in their community," said PC Jon Puckey.

SPRUNGING UP POCKLINGTON

A project has been launched by the Canal & River Trust to remove overgrowth and carry out tree works on the Pocklington Canal. It will support efforts to improve the status of the canal as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), reducing the shading that trees and vegetation cast on the water and giving a boost to important aquatic plants and other species. The project is being funded through a £45,000 grant awarded by WREN's FCC Community Action Fund from funds donated through the Landfill Communities Fund.

ROYAL OPENING FOR DUDLEY

The Princess Royal is to officially open the Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust's new visitor centre. The centre, christened The Portal, is home to an exhibition of the history of Dudley Tunnel and its limestone caverns, plus a learning suite and function room. At the event on 14 March, open to invited guests only, Princess Anne will take a tour of the centre, meet individuals who have played a key role in the project and unveil a plaque. Trust Chairman Jeff Luesley said: "The Princess Royal's visit is a real culmination of everybody's hard work on this seven-year project."



East London opens up

BOW BACK RIVERS

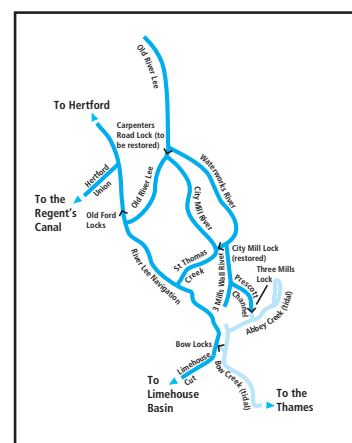
FOUR YEARS AFTER the London Olympics, the formerly obscure waterways which threaded their way through the site are to be re-opened to boats as the centrepiece of a major regeneration scheme.

Often referred to as the Bow Back Rivers, the network of old mill-streams and tidal creeks had largely silted up and become almost unnavigable by the 1980s. Work to exclude tidal water from parts of the system in the 1990s improved the state of the circuit formed by the City Mill River, Old River Lee and St Thomas' Creek; but what really transformed the waterways was work for the Olympics, which saw the new Three Mills Lock built, City Mill Lock restored and the Waterworks River made non-tidal.

However, the ongoing Olympic Legacy work plus Crossrail construction kept the system shut off to visiting boats. That will

change this summer, with the navigable circuit expected to re-open to general navigation, plus access to Waterworks River by booking.

For the future, a Framework Document launched by the Canal & River Trust and London Legacy Development Corporation foresees the restoration of Carpenter's Road Lock creating another circuit, along with new moorings, trip boats, small boat hire, trade boats and towpath links, as part of regeneration of the area. You can download the document at canalrivertrust.org.uk.



IWA take to the tiller for CRT's workboats

A TEAM OF volunteers from the Inland Waterways Association has stepped in to help ensure the Canal & River Trust's fleet of workboats get to where they are needed.

In an exercise aimed at improving the efficiency of use of the fleet, from April 2016 the Trust is turning it into a nationally managed resource, centrally co-ordinated, with craft 'hired' to regional maintenance and construction teams – and also made available to IWA and other volunteer groups.

But that will mean moving the boats

around to where they are wanted – and that's where IWA can help, with a team of volunteers across the country with the necessary boating skills and experience. They will also monitor the vessels' condition and report any problems and repairs needed.

IWA Chairman Les Etheridge said the Association's volunteers would "enable the Trust to improve its efficiency and effectiveness", demonstrating the value of its members and their "commitment to making the waterways better for all users".



What makes the best Living Waterways?

THIS YEAR'S LIVING Waterways Awards have been launched with the Canal & River Trust calling for waterway organisations and groups across the UK to put forward their innovative and inspirational projects for consideration.

Led by an independent panel of experts drawn from the voluntary, environmental, arts, heritage, engineering and architecture sectors, the awards celebrate the work done by individuals, communities and organisations to improve their canals and rivers, making them exciting places to live, learn and spend time.

From inspirational storytelling to dedicated volunteer-led schemes; innovative design and construction projects

to pioneering environmental initiatives, there are seven award categories up for grabs:

1. Art & Interpretation
2. Contribution to the Built Environment
3. Community & Volunteering
4. Education & Learning
5. Natural Environment
6. Recreation & Tourism
7. Restoration & Historic Environment

The closing date for entries is Tuesday 15 March 2016. Further details can be found at canalrivertrust.org.uk/living-waterways-awards-2016.

The winners of this year's awards, which are sponsored by Keir, Arcadis, CPC Civils and Fountains, will be announced at a ceremony in Birmingham on 14 September.

W I TELEGRAPH

BSS HIRE BOAT UPDATE

Following last year's consultation, most of the proposed changes to the Boat Safety Scheme for hire boats (including new checks for slip-resistant surfaces, warning signs for tiller swing areas, and indication of crew areas) are to go ahead. There will, however, be a 12-month delay until April 2017 for clarification of the new rules.

HOUSING HELPS RESTORATION

A major housing development on the edge of Hereford will enable the restoration of a quarter-mile length of the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal. The tricky filled-in section leading up to the east portal of Aylestone Tunnel will take place as part of a scheme to demolish industrial premises and build 120 new homes. It will extend a section already restored as part of the new Aylestone Park, and will include transfer of the tunnel to the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust.

PUT IT BACK!

Barnsley Council has ordered a developer who destroyed a length of abandoned canal bank without planning permission to reinstate it. Unauthorised work in a trade park at Stairfoot which included digging out the Barnsley Canal (proposed for restoration by the Barnsley Dearne & Dove Canal Trust) to a depth of several metres was condemned by a senior councillor who said "They will not get away with it".

MANCHESTER FLOATING TAXIS

Manchester Water Taxis has been given a licence to operate two craft dubbed 'Waxis' on the Bridgewater Canal. The service between Manchester and the Trafford Centre via Old Trafford and Hotel Football will begin later this year.

ALARMS OFFER AFTER FIRE

After the owner of a 57ft narrowboat was saved by his smoke alarm, Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue visited every other boat at the marina offering advice and alarms. The fire occurred overnight at Lechlade's Riverside Marina on the River Thames.



IWA rails against freight terminal

GRAND UNION

A PROPOSED NEW rail freight terminal in Northamptonshire would "irrevocably damage the immediate canal environment", according to the Inland Waterways Association's Northampton Branch.

The eight million square-foot Rail Central scheme would occupy most of the land between Blisworth and Milton Malsor, including the length of the Grand

Union main line from near Blisworth village to Gayton Junction and the Northampton Arm from the junction for some distance towards Rothersthorpe Locks.

The plans have also generated considerable local opposition. While the waterways lobby can claim an earlier local success in getting the 1980s A43 plans altered to reduce the impact on the canal, this is on a different scale: the ultimate decision is likely to be made by central Government which supports transfer of long-distance freight to rail.

Liverpool shake-up is permanent

LEEDS & LIVERPOOL

A WIDER CHOICE of operating days of the Liverpool Link, a removal of the need to book passages on the west end of the Leeds & Liverpool, and a tightening of the time limits for free mooring in the docks are part of a shake-up of arrangements for visiting Liverpool by canal.

The plans, announced a year ago to a certain amount of criticism from some boating groups and trialled late last year have, the Canal & River Trust claimed, been "voted a winner by boaters", and will be permanently implemented from 21 March.

The main features are:

- Six days of two-way operation (Tuesdays excepted) on the Liverpool Link, with up to six boats each way per day.
- Removal of the need to book on the L&L from Aintree to Eldonian Village, encouraging boaters to moor at the Village to visit the city at busy times when the Link is fully booked.
- Seven days' free mooring on the 45 visitor berths in Salthouse Dock, at the far end of the Link. (formerly 14)

CRT says the increased flexibility of the new arrangements means "many more boaters will be able to enjoy the city".

Housing future for historic workshop?

GRAND UNION



BULBOURNE WORKSHOP, WHICH used to build lock gates, is to be redeveloped into new housing – but the historic buildings are to be retained, and the Canal & River Trust is asking for comments on the plans.

Closed down when British Waterways rationalised its workshops in 2003, part of the site alongside the Grand Union's Tring summit remained an operational yard for CRT, while part has been used as a sculpture and blacksmithing workshop, but the majority is vacant and the heritage structures are in need of investment.

The plans by CRT's H2O joint venture include converting the listed buildings to living accommodation, building new housing, a new footbridge and retention of the CRT depot. See bulbourneyard.co.uk.

Wildlife flood threat

"IT'S GOING TO be a hard year ahead for our kingfishers," says Canal & River Trust Environment manager Jonathan Hart-Woods, talking about the impact of the Boxing Day floods on waterway wildlife.

"Pollution levels always play a part in a flooding situation. You get the surface water run-off from surrounding roads and fields, as well as any larger pollution incidents such as sewage. You can see the silt and the litter in the water and in the vegetation with your own eyes.

"A lot of waterway birds are going to find it difficult to feed – kingfishers and herons need clear water to feed in. Our aquatic plants have all been disturbed, and that will have a ripple effect throughout the ecosystem of the waterways.

"Only a small percentage of young

kingfishers survive every year, but they are going to find it especially hard this year. As well as the issues with feeding, we're also going to find that some traditional nesting sites will have been washed away with the flooding. Kingfishers are territorial and like to return to the same nesting sites year after year, but that just won't be possible for them now."

And it's not just birds – "The fast river flows caused by the flooding may well have caught out any young otters who couldn't get themselves to safety," warns Jonathan. "Ground-dwellers such as badgers and foxes may also have been trapped by rising flood waters which could have flooded their setts and dens."

Visit canalrivertrust.org.uk to donate to the Trust's flood appeal.



PHOTO: Joe Frei

BOOK REVIEWS

LIFE WITH OUR FEET UNDER WATER and AGAINST THE CURRENT

Both published as e-books, these are two very different accounts of how couples take advantage of the opportunities of early retirement and change their lives by taking to the water.

Life with our feet under water by Roger Distill is available to buy on Kindle, or free to read on Kindle Unlimited. It tells how retired teacher Roger and his wife, Grace, move on to the water, starting with them choosing and buying narrowboat *Kantara*, and following them through their travels around England's beautiful canals. Unexpected

repairs, charging problems and appalling weather are all taken in their stride, as they improve their skills and show off their new home to friends and family. It's an entertaining dip into all aspects of English canal boating.

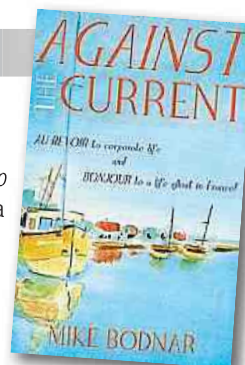
Against the Current by Mike Bodnar, also available on Kindle, and, as you

might guess from the subtitle *Au revoir to the corporate life and bonjour to a life afloat*, it's a look into a more adventurous life on the French waterways. This is the log of Mike and Liz's first year on their Dutch-built cruiser, *Liberty*, as they and their guests travel from northern France to the Canal du Midi in the south, learning about boating life as they go. Journalist and former stand-up comic Mike Bodnar adds a humorous touch to tales of linguistic confusion and multicultural marina life.

Both books take advantage of the e-book format to provide links to online photo albums illustrating each chapter, allowing readers to select which thumbnails they want to see in more detail.

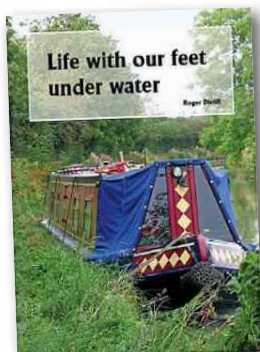
Life with our feet under the water, Roger Distill, amazon.co.uk, e-book £2.99 (free on Kindle Unlimited)

Against the Current: Au revoir to the corporate life and bonjour to a life afloat, Mike Bodnar, Matador self publishing, troubadour.co.uk, £9.99 (print), £4.99 (e-book), 978-1784625382 (print) 978-1785894046 (e-book)



And Finally...

VOLUNTEERS AT THE annual Birmingham Canal Navigations Clean Up might have a reputation for pulling some odd items out of the canal – a coffin, a sword and, of course, a kitchen sink are among the more unlikely – but, this year, they're facing stiff competition from the other side of the English Channel. The ten-yearly clearance of Paris's Canal de Saint Martin has turned up not only the usual junk that wouldn't look out of place in the Wyrley & Essington (such as shopping trolleys, bikes and mattresses), but some more unusual stuff: a rifle, a pistol, a sewing mannequin, a drone, a wheelchair, a gravel compactor and a 1930s Rolleiflex camera. Over to you guys on the BCN in April – the challenge is on!



APP OF THE MONTH

IF YOU'RE THINKING of boating, fishing, walking or cycling on or along the Thames, this app might be for you. Among other features it has an interactive map, GPS

location with navigation, boatyards, slipways, moorings, diesel and pump-out, information on the river, an RSS newsfeed including river conditions, notifications for business offers/

discounts and useful information. Although it's currently only available for iOS devices we reckon it's worth having and hope there will be an Android version soon.

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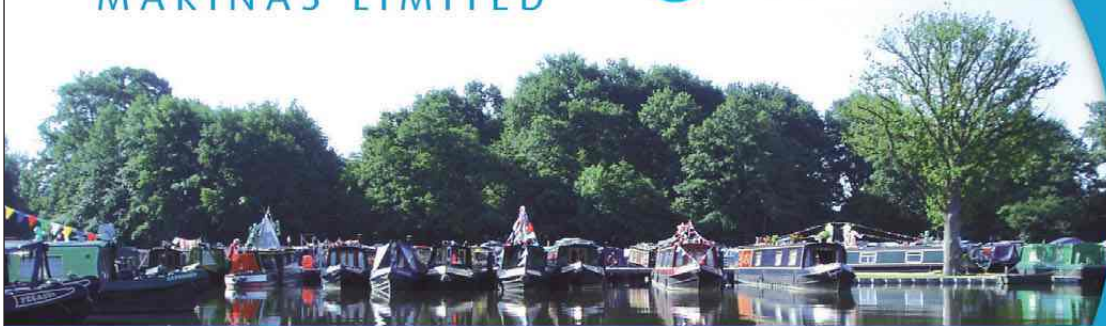
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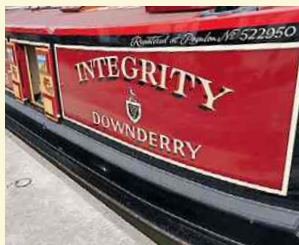
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AGENTS FOR
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LETTERS

TELL US YOUR VIEWS and you could win a Collins Nicholson Waterways Guide of your choice. With their detailed maps, they are an essential part of planning your trips around the canals and rivers.

EMAIL editor@canalboat.co.uk **WRITE** Editor, *Canal Boat*, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham RG40 2EG **LETTERS** that are kept short are more likely to be published in full



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Spectator sport

DURING THE PAST 40 plus years of supporting Birmingham City Football Club, I've crossed one of the bridges over the Grand Union Canal at Bordesley on numerous occasions while walking to their St Andrew's football ground nearby.

Since buying our narrowboat three years ago, I have often thought it would be quite novel to actually go to a match by canal, and this was achieved a few months ago when we set off from our base near Fradley junction and headed into Birmingham.

We had a thoroughly enjoyable couple of days in the city centre (I love what they have achieved with the canals in Birmingham but, being a Brummie, I'm biased, of course).

Saturday arrived and we set off from our mooring for the two-mile journey to the football match. Descending the 13 Farmer's Bridge locks shortly followed by the six Ashted locks, we arrived by the ground a couple of hours later.

After tying up I took the two-minute walk to the ground while my wife and dog stayed on board to look after the boat for the duration of the match.

The 19 locks in two miles had been hard work but it made a refreshing change not to have the usual hassle of the football traffic and parking problems.

Within minutes of the match finishing, instead of having to battle through heavy traffic, I was back home in the nice warm boat

with a welcome hot cuppa waiting for me. I wonder if other readers have stories of any unusual trips they have made in their boats?

NEIL BARNETT, via email

Have you used your boat to get somewhere different? We'd love to hear your stories...



Mooring up down south

AS A BOATER moored in the wild and windy north, where the recent flooding has made life a little exciting, visitor mooring is never really a problem (one of our best kept secrets).

Our plans to venture south all the way to Bristol this year are taking shape but everything we read points to potential problems with official visitor moorings gradually getting worse as we progress. But there is a possible solution:

- Why don't boaters moor alongside each other, when the mooring is full and if it's wide enough?
- Why doesn't the Canal & River Trust make this a requirement of using those moorings, with no exceptions? This would potentially double the availability.
- Notices to this effect should be displayed on suitable moorings and this could easily be achieved before the summer season starts.

I'll let you know how we get on this summer.

NIGEL WILSHAW, *nb Serendipity*

Encouraging for the Erewash

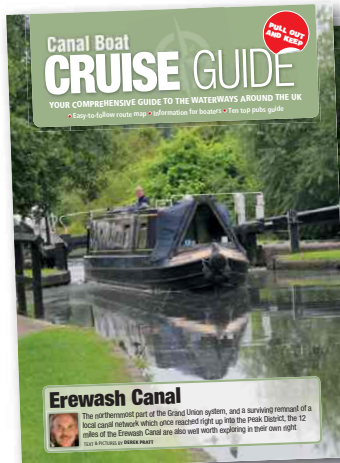
THANK YOU (AND DEREK PRATT) for an excellent Cruise Guide to the Erewash Canal (*CB*, Jan).

As an Association, we have been making determined efforts to try to encourage more boaters to cruise to Langley Mill, offering them the opportunity of purchasing a Head of Navigation plaque (£6) upon their arrival.

I am pleased to say that visitor numbers this year have been higher than for the past few years, and we have sold quite a lot of the HoN plaques.

NORMAN CORNWELL,

Chairman,
Erewash Canal Preservation
& Development Association



The priorities for restoration

Kevin Blick's column (*CB*, Jan) asks a fair question as to how those canals currently being restored will be maintained. He assumes that the fixed amount of money currently spent on maintenance will be more thinly spread when there are more waterways to keep open.

Andrew Cope (*CB*, Feb) suggests that the Inland Waterways Association would be able to determine priorities for restoration so that funds are targeted onto certain key schemes within the national interconnected network.

IWA, under its charitable objectives, is committed to support all waterway restoration schemes because, in simple terms, IWA believes that waterways bring public benefits and are, therefore, 'a good thing' – and more of a good thing is better.

What IWA's Restoration Committee does is encourage proponents of waterway restorations to consider the costs and benefits of their proposal. Each project has its own set of benefits which it brings to its locality – not just the boating and the tourist spend but also the public access, the cooling water, the safe routes for service pipes and cables, the storm water

attenuation, and the improved development land values from being waterside. For the boating opportunities, the waterway operator will receive revenue in licence fees from boaters.

Most, if not all, of the other benefits can be used as opportunities to bring in additional revenue. Local people who value their waterway will give benefit in kind by volunteering to help with maintenance.

The resources to keep each waterway open are for each project to understand and develop – and there's much more to the mix than direct central government support.

We encourage waterway restoration organisations to think laterally about what business and economic opportunities their project will bring – and to ensure that a proportion of that wealth finds its way into the project on a continuing basis. It is this approach which will determine a sustainable future for more waterways.

LUKE WALKER

Deputy Chair,
Restoration Committee IWA

It's not just the north that cops it...

Just to prove that it's not just the north that gets some water, we had just a little over two days... in fact, over 4ft!

The Canal & River Trust was here ready to install

new lock gates at Mountsorrel on the River Soar, but looking at the river it could be a while, I think.

LES MERRY,

via email

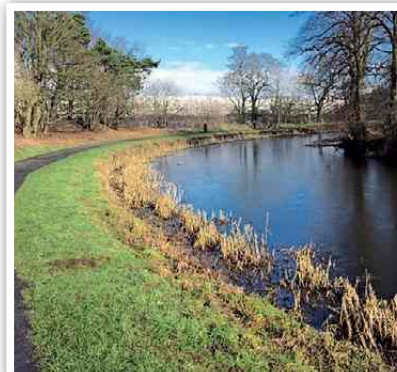


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*Nice day for a walk along
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Quality and value is an obsession.

A range of narrowbeam and widebeam boats in a class of their own.

Getting into the soul of the modern boat owner is not always easy, but one company that has made it their mission is the New and Used Boat Co. For founder, Chris Hill, it all comes together in their Aqualine range of narrow and wide beam boats, where quality and value for money is a virtual obsession.

"We're always aiming to be in a class of our own, with the kind of fit and finish you'd expect in a bespoke craft...but definitely without the bespoke price tag," says Chris.

They manage to achieve this with clever computer-aided design and manufacturing methods that keep costs under control but still allow multiple floorplans and many optional extras. There's no compromise either on the materials, which include oak and ash hardwoods on the

inside and high-grade steel for the hull, finished in a long lasting polyurethane paint system.

But what many Aqualine owners love above all is the attention to detail. Stephen Hedges, for example, waxes lyrical on the hinges of the cupboards in his galley.

"They're these precision sprung type so you get that lovely snug fit when the door closes!"

It's just one small example of the exquisite finish and subtle features that run throughout the Aqualine range, from the traditional woodwork mouldings to the LED downlighters that add so much atmosphere to evenings on the water.



Designed for the discerning

People who buy from the Aqualine range are often enthusiasts who have undertaken a lot of research into the marketplace. David Watson, who now has his Canterbury widebeam moored on the Thames, spent a year and a half checking out suppliers and builders before deciding that Aqualine was ultimately the only choice.

"The boat seemed to be a reference point for all the others," he says, *"and it feels like the combination of a luxury car and a luxury flat."*

It was the company's decision to base the Aqualine factory in the heart of the historic Polish shipbuilding region which makes this level of perfectionism possible. The creation of every single boat is overseen by

Managing Director, Jon Corker, who is proud of his workforce and the equipment in their Malbork factory.

"The facilities here are superb," he comments, *"we can do the whole process ourselves and ensure quality control at every stage."*

No wonder that, for many, owning an Aqualine boat is like membership of an exclusive club. If you're thinking of joining them, then one of the first people you'll encounter is Sales Specialist, Sam Bennett, *"My job is to make dreams come true,"* she says.

So whether you want a boat for accommodation or for leisure, for cruising the UK or exploring the European waterways, it's clear that an Aqualine craft, with its passionate commitment to quality and versatility, is the one to fulfil all your needs...and possibly more.

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Taking it easy while Bridge 42 was under repair

Wheels to water



After many years of exploring the canals by caravan, Alistair and his wife decided to take the plunge and hire a narrowboat. But how would they get on...?

WORDS & PICTURES BY **ALISTAIR MARTIN**

My wife and I are lifelong caravanners (almost 40 years) but at least one trip each year, we try to find a site close to the canals, and although my wife has an absolute dread of water and boats, walking and cycling the towpaths causes no concern and we find the paths an ideal way to see the country.

We have also been avid readers of *Canal Boat* for over five years, so had a good idea of what a narrowboat looked

like inside, and all of the issues under discussion, such as dredging, foliage clearance, overstayers, etc.

I have always wanted to try a canal cruise but always considered it would never happen. You can imagine my surprise, therefore, when last year while walking through Skipton, my wife announced: "Why don't we try a trip on a boat sometime to see what it's like?" You could have knocked me down with a feather.

So where to take our trip? It could only be from one place – Llangollen. We have pitched our caravan at Chirk on many occasions and know the area well. And we decided we would go to coincide with my wife's 60th birthday at the end of June.

So, on 27 June, we collected our hire boat from Black Prince at Chirk marina and set off on our adventure, complete with our cat and dog. They go everywhere with us in the caravan, so why not a boat?

Our intention was that we'd go up to Llangollen, turn around, go down to Hurleston and then back up to Chirk. In the end it didn't quite work out that way.

After several bumps getting the boat lined up for bridge holes, and fighting the current on the narrower places, we made



The first night at Llangollen



June works a liftbridge



Happy birthday June



Boating is fine by us

it to Llangollen, crossing over the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. After a good meal in the town, we settled down to a peaceful night's sleep.

The following morning dawned wet and miserable and that lasted all morning, until just before New Marton locks, which is where my wife had to manage her first ever lock. With a little advice from other boaters, we were soon on our way.

Our second stop for the night was at the Narrowboat Inn where we had another excellent meal. We then had the pleasure of sitting on the canal bank watching a barn owl gliding across the fields looking for its supper. Utter bliss.

The next day dawned hot and breezy so we set off early, heading for Whitchurch. By the time we reached it, the temperature was hitting 26C and I was starting to feel the effects of being exposed to the sun for over six hours. We moored up and set about finding somewhere to get a good meal. We found the Bulls Head and can

'Our intention was to go up to Llangollen, turn around, go down to Hurleston then back to Chirk. In the end it didn't work out like that'

thoroughly recommend it. The next morning, my wife's birthday, was even hotter. First thing in the morning we walked the dog down to Grindley Brook locks to see what was in store for us. Mayhem! The queues were already forming.

We decided that, with the heat already building, and as it was her birthday, there really was no point in joining the queue, working through the locks as an inexperienced crew, cruising most of the day only to have to turn around the next morning and do it all in reverse. So, instead, we decided to stay where we were, explore Whitchurch, have another good meal at the Bulls Head and head

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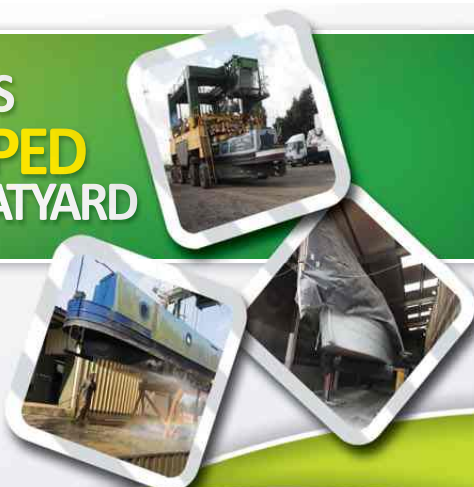
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Heading towards New Marton Locks

◀ back the next day. Early that morning, we started off on our return trip, perfectly relaxed.

That feeling of relaxed happiness lasted as far as bridge 42. It was broken, couldn't be opened and there was a long queue ahead of us already. Six hours later, with 11 boats ahead and a further ten behind, we decided there was no point in trying to get to Ellesmere. It was

too late in the day, there were too many ahead of us, and there would be few decent berths available. So, about five miles short of our intended destination, we pulled over to a quiet spot and settled down to a peaceful night, miles from anywhere. All we had was the scent of wild honeysuckle and dog roses wafting into the boat and a lone swan to keep us company.

Then, the following morning, we set off and finally reached Ellesmere just under two hours later and found a perfect mooring in the basin, after executing a near perfect turn in the winding hole (we were really chuffed at that). We had another quiet night chatting to other boaters over a drink or two.

The next day, we set off for Chirk which we reached in just over four hours of gentle cruising. We set off bright and early the next morning on our last leg, reaching the marina and handing over to the crew.

So what did our week on the canal teach us? Firstly, the boating fraternity are a really friendly crowd, with a cheery hello from everyone we met. Secondly, the issues being talked about in the canal magazines are entirely relevant. I thought that on such a busy canal as the Llangollen, with its (slight) current, there

would be clear water all the way. How wrong could I be? On the second day out, we ran aground three times pulling over to let someone pass.

The overhanging shrubbery is really out of control – I had to retrieve my hat three times with the boathook and that was from the middle of the canal, not the edge. The undergrowth at some bridge holes is so long that it whips your legs as you go through.

Another discussion issue that I noticed was that of the 'continuous cruiser'. I think there are more than a few boats on the Llangollen who don't move at all. We passed the same boats coming home four days later as we'd passed on the way down, still in the same spot and still looking as if they'd been dredged up from the canal bottom. Good luck to the Canal & River Trust in sorting that problem out

Would I do another canal trip? Yes, the Mon & Brec looks like a decent shortish trip to consider, but it all depends on my wife... In the meantime, we'll continue to caravan within reach of the canals and look forward to reading that CRT have got all of the issues in hand.

CB



The sun doesn't always shine on the cut

WHAT'S IN *the name*



CHEERS TO STUART & VIV JOWETT who emailed to tell us: "This is our new and first boat. It's a 55ft x 11ft widebeam that went into the water in August 2014. Based at Caen Hill Marina the name, *It's 5 O'Clock Somewhere*, speaks for itself! It's actually a song by Alan Jackson. (the video is good as well). I designed the layout and we have a wine cellar in the galley."

Why not write in to tell us how your boat was named?

Email: editor@canalboat.co.uk

Write: *Canal Boat Magazine*, Archant Specialist, Evolution House, 2-6 Eastthampstead Rd, Wokingham RG40 2EG.

IT'S YOUR TURN: TELL US ABOUT YOUR BOAT

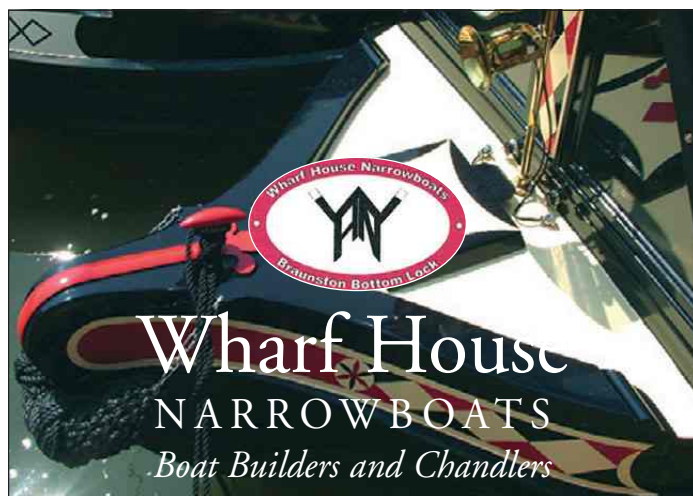
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Aren't we all travellers..?

After nearly three months of floods in York, most of which we spent clinging to a rising jetty at the tidal lock at Naburn, we eventually managed to get off the boat, reassured by all concerned that that was now it for the season and we could relax.

Of course, no-one's an expert where a river flow is concerned. Our feet had barely touched terra firma before it started raining again. And what was previously a problem of how to get off the boat, very soon became one of how to get back on again.

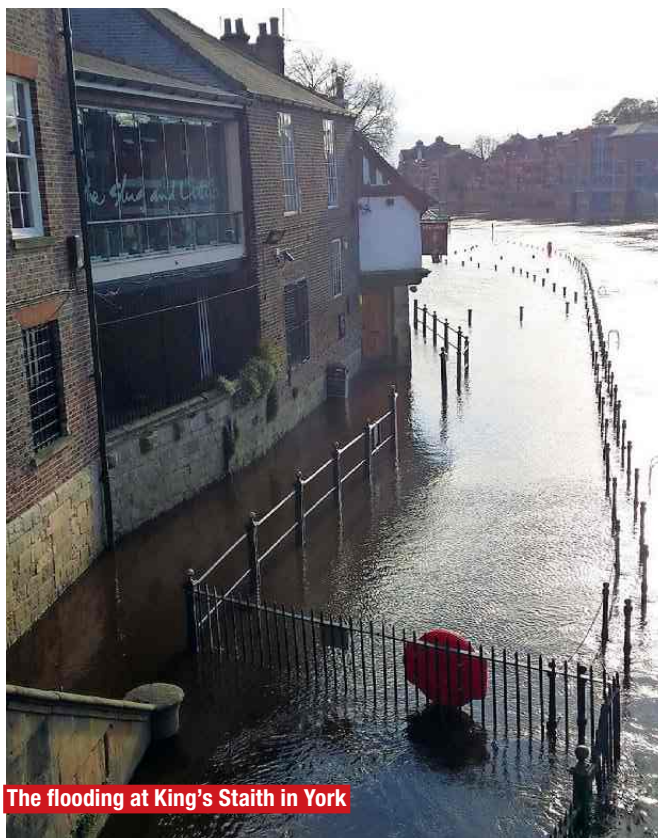
We spent a couple of weeks sofa surfing as the young call it, but you can put upon friends only so far; and eventually we decided to run up the white flag and catch the first plane to anywhere warm – which just happened to be South Africa. And it's from South Africa I'm writing.

The sun is shining, the temperature is like a hot August afternoon and good wine's a couple of quid a bottle... But you don't want to know about any of this.

We, of course, were labelled 'fair-weather boaters' on Facebook, and I have to confess to feeling a hint of guilt that we'd panicked too early when we first arrived and I saw from the Environmental Agency website that river levels on the Yorkshire Ouse were returning to normal.

Since then though, we read of more storms battering

'Isn't the biggest attraction of the canals the freedom they allow us to pack up our homes and wander wherever we fancy?'



The flooding at King's Staith in York

Blighty, and we watch with incredulity as webcams show the Ouse lapping over the bank at King's Staith once more for what, by my count, is the NINTH separate flood this beleaguered town has suffered since October.

Poor York has had higher floods in its history, and it's had floods that have gone on as long. But locals are telling me that they can't recall floods as high as these which have gone on with the regularity of the ones this year.

We may be a long way away from them, but our hearts still go out to those in the town, and other towns across the

country who are still suffering this dreadful winter.

Being on holiday with time to chill out around the pool and on beaches, I've had the chance to catch up on some canal social media sites without which I'm not sure I'd have heard of the antics of Bath boatyard which has made an early pitch for my 2016 Cock Up of the Year Award.

For those of you who haven't heard, Bath Boatyard, one of the British Waterways Marinas Ltd group, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Canal & River Trust, heard that some people had pitched up nearby in caravans and immediately issued a series of warnings to their berthholders which were so obviously racist in tone they

did – to be fair – apologise for what they'd done almost immediately afterwards.

It was the sort of stupid mistake that might have been made by a junior member of staff, or an inexperienced managerial muppet having a bad day; and I don't think it merits a self-righteous crusade on my part that might lead to anyone losing their job. Even so, I can't help wondering when the signs went up around the site warning people of 'travellers', whether whoever had authorised it saw any irony in the notices.

Because aren't we all of us with boats on the canal 'travellers' too? Aren't we all what former Inland Waterways Association president A.P. Herbert in his 1930s novel called 'Water Gypsies'?

Indeed, isn't it this gypsy lifestyle that draws us to the water? Isn't the biggest attraction of the canals the freedom they allow us to pack up our homes at will and wander unhindered wherever we fancy?

And that, I guess, is what I found the saddest part of the whole affair: that the Bath Marina staff were so blinded by their own prejudice that they couldn't make the link between the 'travellers' they were criticising and the travellers whose passion for boats provides them their livelihood.

Andrew Rossiter got it right. He's one of those Bath berthholders and was personally shocked by the notices. "They add to a climate of fear and mistrust of all gypsies and travellers," he said. "Including those who live on boats. It beggars belief..."

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.....

..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

Email:.....

ABOUT YOUR VESSEL.

Name of Craft:.....

Reg No. of Craft:.....

Type of Craft: Cruiser, Narrow Boat, etc:.....

Length:..... Width:.....

Hull: Wood ☐ Fiberglass ☐ Steel ☐

ENGINE DETAILS.

Type: Inboard ☐ Outboard ☐

Under Warranty: Yes ☐ No ☐

Make:..... Engine: (cc/HP).....

Electrical System: 12 Volt ☐ 24 Volt ☐

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From car journalism to the canals was a change of pace, but living on board tug *Harry* is a constant eye-opener

We like a bit of adventure boating...

I met some old journalistic mates for lunch recently. None of them had much of a clue about canals so I found myself doing an impromptu selling job.

Once we'd got past the first question – it's always the first question in winter time – “aren't you cold on a boat?” I realised that trying to explain my enthusiasm for narrowboating was making me think harder about exactly why I did enjoy it so much. (Sometimes when you're happy doing something you're too busy enjoying yourself to think precisely why you are getting you the buzz you feel.)

Like all of you, I love the travelling, the misty mornings, the pubs, the scenery, the sunsets, the chats at locks and all of that. But what I really enjoy is that canal boating is a kind of gentle adventure.

And, from time to time, there's a frisson of excitement, a hint of risk, a bit of physical struggle. At the time it doesn't always seem terribly enjoyable. When we were being pushed backwards up the tidal Great Ouse by the incoming stream after I misjudged my turn into Salter's Lode, I was downright scared but now it's a good story to recount over a pint.

It doesn't have to be quite so extreme either. When you helm a boat with a 3ft draught around the system, as we do, there are plenty of occasions when you experience quite enough mini-adventures to keep anyone short of a

'We ground to a halt again mid-stream. By now it was dark so we stayed stuck, had dinner and drowned our sorrows'

**Yup, the phone went in the Thames...
a tow on the Nene, and inside Gosty Tunnel**



adrenalin sports enthusiast content.

We had our fair share when we tackled the Llangollen. Britain's most popular canal is 'officially' a shallow one, an excuse the Canal & River Trust can always fall back on if a deep boat like ours gets into trouble. All the same, working boats have made it all the way so we weren't too worried.

We had reached halfway without problems then I had to man-haul the boat through the (fortunately short) Ellesmere Tunnel as the going was so sticky. After a few more sticky stretches we met one that was pure Superglue and ground to terminal stop. I phoned CRT who said: “It's been raining a lot so we ran off an inch of water into the reservoir”. Hmm. An inch?

More like four of them I reckon.

So we gave up – the first time we've ever retreated in the face of a canal enemy. But even the retreat was a bit Napoléon and Moscow: we had to reverse for nearly a mile before we found a spot to turn round.

We trudged back through the silt like Napoléon's beaten troops and into the Ellesmere Tunnel once more. Where we got hopelessly and completely stuck once more at the exit. It's known to be a shallow spot and, therefore, has never been dredged. Mass pulling on ropes by passers-by failed to shift us and only when another boat managed to squeeze past us – with more pulling and shoving – could he finally drag us free.

A couple of miles later we suddenly ground to a halt again in the middle of a wide, open stretch of canal. Yards from the bank. With no-one about. Eventually three or

four hefty types arrived, hauled on ropes and finally we were away again – until we ground to a halt once more in mid-stream. By now it was dark so we stayed stuck, had dinner and drowned our sorrows.

It's always been this way. Our first ever trip in our old boat *Star* set the tone. That saw us boating through snow and frozen canals on a tight schedule to beat the closures. As the ice closed in around us and the snow deepened we crunched on, scrambled across frozen locks and leapt on to snow covered banks. Quite, quite mad.

And if it's not extremes of weather, it's extremes of waterway, from crossing The Wash to the famously slow, tight Gosty Hill Tunnel where it takes an hour to do a mile. Fun? Not always but certainly challenging, adventurous, and, ultimately, memorable. Not everyone's cup of tea but that's our sort of boating.

CB

THE BOAT TEST

Definitely different



Dolly Blue

Circa £150,000

LENGTH:	60ft
STYLE:	Semi-cruiser
BERTHS:	4
LAYOUT:	Reverse
POWER:	Beta 43hp



WORDS
ADAM PORTER
INTERIOR PICTURES
ANDY R ANNABLE

Boat interiors provide hours of intense bar discussion, but there are often common themes – this month we’ve taken a look at a boat whose fit-out is certainly out of the ordinary

Wood divides opinion. For some people the inside of a narrowboat should be wood: they like the colour, the texture and the feel of it. But we’ve also met others who aren’t so keen. We’ve reviewed some of their boats, too. They talk about not wanting to live in a wooden box. Some have even allowed the word ‘coffin’ to pass their lips.

The usual way of reducing the amount of wood in a boat is to paint the cabin sides and ceiling, and lay some kind of non-wood floor covering. But often the trim, such as the window and porthole surrounds are still visibly wooden.

But even that was too much for Glynis Smith, who wanted a boat built for herself and her husband, Michael. She’d had a wooden kitchen at home and taken against the colour of the wood as it aged. “I didn’t want what I call yellow wood,” she says. “Whether it’s oak or ash, it all changes colour, and I don’t like it!”

So, in collaboration with her boat builders, Aqua, Glynis came up with a scheme. Although the interior actually contains a lot of wood, there’s no natural colour to be seen because every piece has been painted or stained. The result, combined with a modern design, is a strikingly different finish.

EXTERIOR

Dolly Blue is a 60-footer based on a Colecraft shell. And it’s recognisably a Colecraft thanks to its bow. There are finger-grips down the handrails and detailing such as scrolls on the cants. As you’d expect from such a well known and highly regarded builder, the steelwork looks excellent.

This is a semi-cruiser, where the cruiser stern deck is partially enclosed by lockers. It’s both practical and attractive, providing plenty of space for crew, lots of storage, and a bit more protection than you’d get on a full cruiser stern.

One of the lockers on the stern deck contains the gas bottles, which makes it far easier to lift them in and out compared with a locker in the nose where you have to stand on the bow. In this boat, the bow locker is purely for storage and there’s access from the well deck. The well deck itself also has built in lockers for storage and has somewhere to sit.

The trim is all chrome finish. The Wesley windows are double glazed and have a built-in thermal break in the aluminium frame. This means they should be much less liable to have condensation forming on the frames.

All Aqua boats are sandblasted before painting to provide a really good smooth finish, then they’re sprayed with two-pack epoxy paint. It’s no surprise that *Dolly Blue* is blue – and quite a traditional dark blue at that. But there are indications of the contemporary look you’ll find inside: the coach lines and roof are a non-traditional and rather bright powder blue (one of Glynis’s favourite colours) and the bow flashes have a modern striking design.

LAYOUT AND FIT-OUT

This is a reverse layout boat so the galley is at the stern, followed by a versatile dinette and then the saloon. A walk-through shower room is further forward, with the cabin at the bow.

It’s the fit-out where this boat departs from the norm. There isn’t an inch of

PHOTO: Courtesy of Aqua Narrowboats

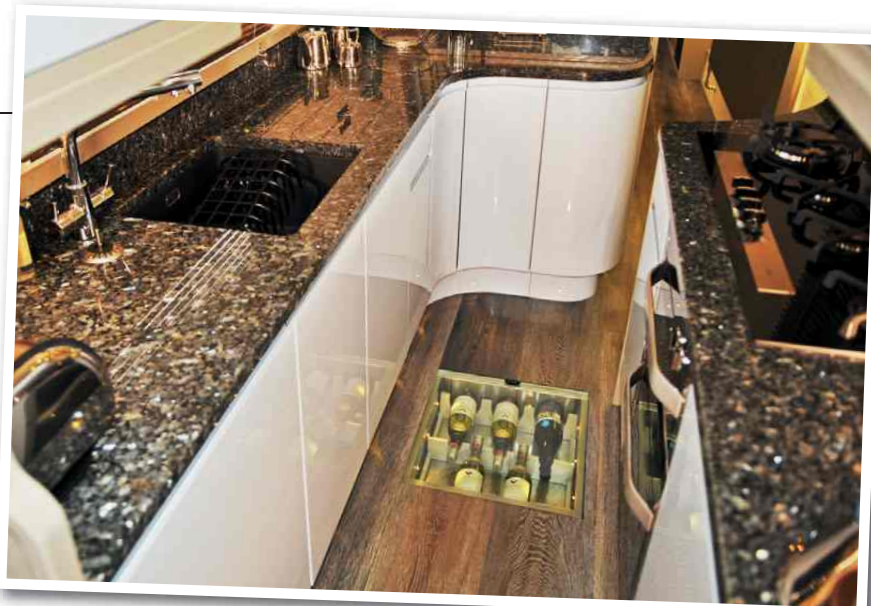
THE BOAT TEST

◀ wood colour showing anywhere – and yet there's still lots of attractive wood texture.

The ash panels above the gunwales are painted in an eggshell finish, while those below are stained. The colour is very similar, yet subtly different; in both cases the grain of the wood shows through. All the oak trim is stained in a soft and attractive grey, again allowing the wood grain to show through. Multiple test sheets were needed to find exactly the right level of coverage.

Justin Hudson-Oldroyd from Aqua Narrowboats says this finish added a great deal of time to the build.

'The interior design is contemporary, verging on minimalist but also very comfortable and appealing, and the colours work well'



"Normally, we'd paint the panels, fit the trim, then varnish it, he says. "But we couldn't risk the grey stain bleeding into the white. So all the trim was made and fitted, then taken back out of the boat to be stained before being refitted when they were dry." It means each piece of trim has been fitted at least twice.

The floor is an engineered and treated oak by Kahrs. The colour matches

beautifully and the wide boards provide a sense of space.

The interior design is all the work of Glynis – and she's done a great job. The colours all work well together and the boat is lifted by a mixture of textures and surfaces. It's contemporary, verging on the minimalist, but also very comfortable and appealing.

Galley has a fresh sleek look and there's a great deal built into it





The dinette's attractive (note the curved table corners) and it's cleverer than it looks

GALLEY

'Sleek' would be a good word to describe this galley. It's glossy and sensuously curvy, but still practical. For a start, the steps which lead down from the rear deck all have lifting treads for storage and there are cupboards either side. One is full height and heated, while the other contains the electrics.

In the galley proper, there's so much going on it's hard to know where to look first, so let's start at the top and work down. There are single high-level cupboards either side, with lights above and coloured glass doors, made bespoke

to fit. One houses a microwave. The sparkly black granite worktops catch the eye, and the sink doesn't detract from them because it's black and so it virtually disappears. It's made from a composite material by Franke. On the opposite side, there's a linear, frameless black glass four-burner hob by CDA.

The cupboard doors have a gloss finish and a gentle pale blue colour. Glynis was keen on the sleek look, so there are no door handles; instead, there's a finger-grip along the top of each door. Behind the doors, there's plenty of storage, but also a full-size 240-volt fridge

on one side, and a full-size freezer on the other. The oven is also a full-size Belling.

The L-shaped run of units has curves rather than sharp corners. Glynis is a keen cook, so the big corner cupboard has been provided with shelves which offer a huge amount of storage for ingredients. On the other side of the boat, curved open shelves match the shape of the tapering worktop above.

There are LED lights in the kickboards, and there's a wine store set into the floor. With its lid being made from a piece of glass and little LED lights inside, it adds a touch of glamour.

THE OWNERS

GLYNIS AND MICHAEL SMITH have contrasting boating histories. Michael used to be a surgeon, and then joined the Royal Navy as a doctor, serving for six years, which included spells at sea. Before the big ships, he had a river cruiser. Glynis, by contrast, had no boating experience at all. She had a career as a hospital theatre sister, before working for a pharmaceutical company.

The couple retired the first time around some 20 years ago and converted a barn to live in.

Some of the finance came from a legacy from Michael's Aunt Dolly, so they called it Dolly Barn. Together they transformed the land around the barn from a couple of acres of scrub into spectacular gardens which were opened to the public under the National Garden Scheme.

When the couple retired again and moved from the barn, they called their new home Dolly House. So it was only natural that their boat should also have Dolly in the name, so *Dolly Blue* it is.

DINETTE

We're used to dinettes that convert into a guest bed, but this one is even more versatile than most. The benches each house a pull-out box which, with the addition of a cushion, provide additional seating. And under the table there's a set of runners that pull out and support an extra section (stored in the plinth).

Together they mean this table can comfortably seat six, and that's important when you like entertaining as much as Glynis and Michael do. And when the table is dropped down to convert to a bed, the pull-out sections



Everything's hidden away in the saloon

◀ can also be used to make it into a super king size. What's more, if you need extra seating in the saloon, the backrest from the dinette can be removed.

There are glazed side hatches on both sides of the dinette, and there are ceiling lights over the table. These were sourced by Glynis, but had to be adapted by Aqua to run on 12 volts, and had to be trimmed to shape, to match the curve of the ceiling. There are also under-gunwale LEDs in the dinette and saloon. These can be controlled by an app on a smartphone. There's also a very stylish stainless steel designer radiator that's almost two metres long.

SALOON

Glynis and Michael like the minimalist look, so it was important not to have too many things on show in the saloon. So



Too subtle? We don't think so

there are two cleverly made cupboard units, one under the gunwale on one side, the other on the bulkhead next to the stove. Their square doors are made of glass in contrasting colours (the darker ones are actually bronze mirror that's been sandblasted). One door hides a small flat screen TV, and one of Aqua's joiners has made a little wooden wedge to stop the door swinging about.

The stove is diesel fired Lockgate-Refleks, sitting on a granite hearth with glass mosaic tiles behind. On the bulkhead above there's a large mirror, but being bronze, it looks fairly muted and doesn't overpower the room.

There are some neat little cube wall lights by the Italian firm, Quick Marine Lighting, too, and Aqua has adapted them so they, handily, each have their own switch.



SHOWER ROOM

The sleek, stylish look continues in the shower room where there's a 900mm quadrant shower lined with acrylic. This has a slight sparkliness to it, although Glynis now thinks it could afford to be a little less subtle.

A smart oval basin sits on a granite worktop, with storage underneath. Again, there are no door handles on the cupboards, just a finger-grip along the top edge. The soft grey colour continues.

The toilet is a macerating unit by Jabsco, with the holding tank under the bed in the cabin.

CABIN

The bed is set across the boat, with the simplest form of infill: a flip-down hinged board. It means it's very easy to make up, without the need to push or pull. Either side of the bed there are large, spacious wardrobes with bronze mirrored doors. Again there are no handles sticking out, just little recesses.

The side of each wardrobe has a little cubby hole at the head of the bed for a book or glass. Above, there are a couple of high-level cupboards with reading lights underneath.

Additional storage includes a corner cupboard and the space under the broad steps up to the well deck. The treads lift, to reveal a large space. There's another stainless steel radiator in this room, too.

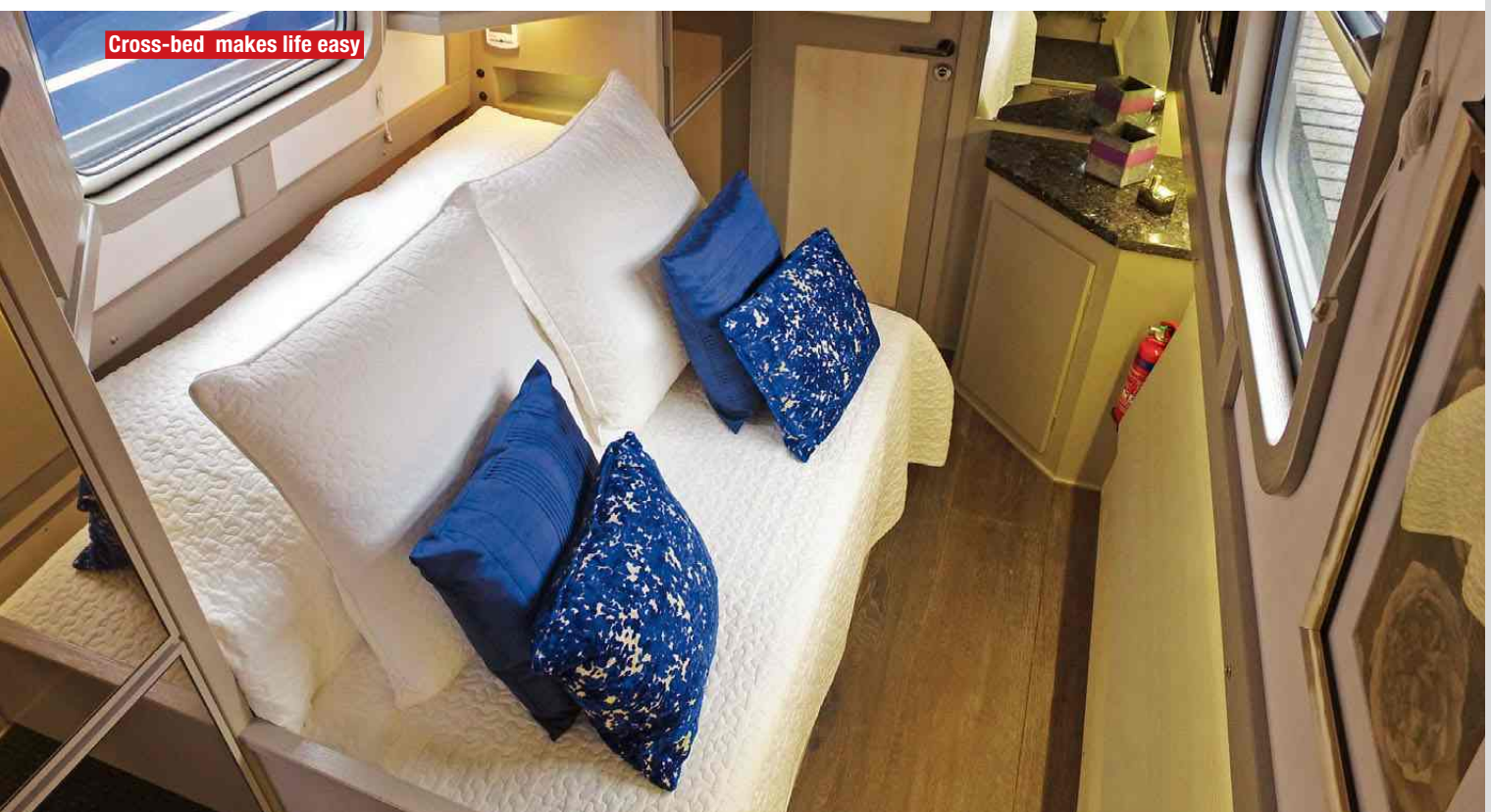


TECHNICAL

Technically, this boat is fairly straightforward. It's powered by a Beta 43 which is fitted with a hospital silencer. There's also a 75kgf Vetus electric bow thruster.

Electrical power comes from four 110Ah domestic batteries (and there's one for the engine). There's a Victron 3kW Multiplus inverter charger and a shoreline point at both the bow and stern.

Heating (in addition to the diesel stove) is from a Webasto diesel boiler. ▶



Cross-bed makes life easy

AQUA NARROWBOATS

AQUA IS BASED at Mercia Marina in Derbyshire and boat building is just part of the business. They run a successful hire fleet which operated at more than 90 percent occupancy during last season. All of the hire boats are built by Aqua and they're all sponsored. The owner pays for the build, takes a proportion of the rental income for two or three

years and then has the boat for themselves. The company also does a lot of maintenance and servicing work on boats and has Mercia's dry dock on site. Three or four new boats are built each year, which always includes one new hire boat.

Aqua has expanded significantly since Justin Hudson-Oldroyd built the very first hire boat

himself. He now employs two engineers, three joiners and two people (including his wife, Jane) in the office. There's also a team of part-time staff who turn around the hire boats. More developments are on the cards in the shape of an extension to the office to give a proper reception for hire customers, and a meeting room for boat-building clients.

ON THE WATER

Glynis and Michael enjoy having friends on board, so the semi-cruiser stern deck suits their needs very well. Not only is there enough room for several crew, but the lockers give them somewhere to sit.

The Morse control is on a column at the end of one of the lockers so it's reasonably comfortable for the helmsman, although it's a bit lower than it would be in a semi-trad or trad. The engine panel is inside the boat, so the dials aren't immediately visible.

We've always liked the way Colecraft shells handle but, for once, we were hamstrung on the day of the test when one of the innumerable winter storms suddenly swooped in and thoroughly scuppered our test cruise plans (not to mention our external photography...); but Glynis and Michael assure us this boat is no exception to the usual pleasant Colecraft handling.

CONCLUSION

You have to admire owners who have the vision to do something a bit different in their boat – and a builder who is prepared to go along with them and bring it to reality.

The idea of a boat without any wood showing won't be to everyone's taste. But it really works. That's in no small part to the clarity of the colour scheme Glynis has come up with. Everything matches without being the same colour, and there are numerous different textures to appreciate, from wood grain to glass, granite to stainless steel. And while you could say the design is minimalist, it's also welcoming and comfortable.

Of course, all this comes at a price and Justin Hudson-Oldroyd from Aqua says the extra work involved means that if you wanted a boat such as this it would cost around £150,000. But that's not

unreasonable. It's a boat on a good shell and with a high quality fit-out that's been done with real care and attention.

And if you want to see what the wood-free interior looks like in real life, then the Crick Boat Show will be the place to head for because *Dolly Blue* will be on show there. **CB**

Verdict:
'Well made and laid-out, it's good to see something different'

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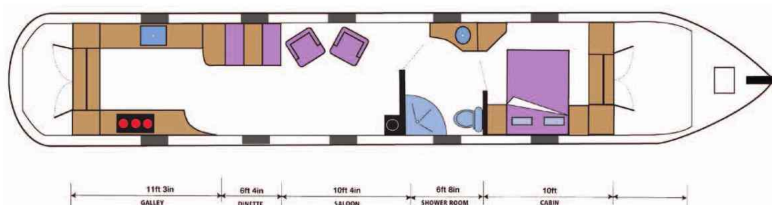
All prices are approximate and may depend on supplier and any discounts obtained



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Dolly Blue 60ft

c£150,000



LENGTH: 60ft
BEAM: 6ft 10in
SHELL: Colecraft
STYLE: Cruiser
LAYOUT: Reverse
FIT-OUT: Painted ash and oak
ENGINE: Beta 43
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Murder on the T&M

The Slees explore the Trent & Mersey, discovering two murder stories which have turned up in film and TV dramas

TEXT AND PICTURES BY **FIONA & JOHN SLEE**



Looking back to Fradley Junction

Narrowboat *Epiphany*



Our return to the Coventry Canal from the Ashby was imminent and, in the event, quite quick. First, we moved from Snarestone to Shackerstone, unable to resist a ride on the Battlefield Line which runs steam trains.

However, once again, we were foiled in this ambition. The promised steam loco did not materialise but we still enjoyed the short trip to Shenton and back on a diesel, on a wet, misty day.

We did a couple of overnight stops before reaching Marston Junction and turning right towards Fradley Junction.

The Coventry Canal used to be a busy trade route, part of the London to Birmingham route begun by James Brindley. The Canal Company ran out of money, supposedly because of Brindley's high standards and, when construction ceased at Atherstone, he was replaced. Construction continued in co-operation with other canal companies to complete the through route from Coventry to Fradley. The canal cuts through Bedworth, Nuneaton, Atherstone, Polesworth and Tamworth and today forms part of the Warwickshire Ring.

Hartshill Wharf, once a bustling maintenance yard, looked deserted and run down. This historic site comprises of workshops, a covered wharf, blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops and a manager's house. Some of it is listed as it was an important Coventry Canal Company site. Over the years there have been rumours of development but, apart from a few workboats, it does not seem to have changed much. I hope it will be preserved and not disappear to development as so much of our canal heritage has.

With the Atherstone flight looming, we were grateful one of our friends, a volunteer lock-keeper, was on duty the day we went down the flight. John and Stephen set the 11 locks, with Stephen dashing on his trusty bicycle between us and a single-hander. These locks had sideponds but all but one are now redundant, with the sluices removed. Arriving at the bottom of the flight, we

moored and said goodbye to Stephen.

The following day, we had two more locks to do at Glascote. They took some time as we had a very slow single-hander ahead of us who John helped through. The locks (also with redundant side ponds) are very slow fillers and the top lock was due for some work, replacing leaky gates and damaged masonry. We were now past the last winter stoppage that would affect us, so no more 'racing' to beat these scheduled works.

Passing Alvecote, its well known Samuel Barlow pub and historic boats, we came to Fazeley Junction. Here the Coventry Canal changes character, becoming more rural with fields and attractive brick accommodation bridges. The section to Whittington was built by the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal Company because they and the Trent & Mersey Canal Company wanted a through route completed. This has left a legacy of bridge names rather than numbers on the bridges for the next few miles. The Trent & Mersey Canal agreed to build the section from Fradley to Whittington, which the Coventry Canal eventually bought back.

And so we came to Hopwas. We have often moored there because of its handy eateries and good bus route to Tamworth. I went off to Lancaster by train and John moved *Epiphany* to Streethay Wharf as she was booked in for some work. When I returned we waited another day for our TravelPower generator to return and be fitted, but the rest of the work was complete – a new headlight, dent bashed out and the Victron checked. Hopefully, all was now well, except we were a little poorer!

We arrived at Fradley, staying on the moorings on the Coventry Canal. There was a bit of ice and snow around so we waited for more clement weather before turning on to the Trent & Mersey to go northwards.

Fradley Junction was very quiet. The Swan was open but the shop and gallery were not and there were only a few walkers around. We visited the excellent all year round café below Junction Lock and were amazed that

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Wood End Lock on the Trent & Mersey

the moorings opposite were empty.

It seemed appropriate that, in this 300th anniversary year of James Brindley's birth, we were to be on his 'Grand Trunk' Canal for a bit.

The then little known engineer was commissioned to design the canal. Backed by land owners and his friend Josiah Wedgwood, construction was completed in 1777. Sadly, Brindley died before it was completed but his influence was still evident in the brick arched bridges, locks and contours. It is amazing what he achieved in only 13 years of canal design and building and this year there will be many tributes to him.

From Fradley, the rural canal reaches Handsacre where it skirts the town, leading to a high embankment after the well known narrow cut past the Armitage Shanks factory and narrow Armitage Tunnel. Hewn from rock, the tunnel was the first to be built with a towpath. Local coal mining caused land subsidence, resulting in it being opened out and the canal banks reinforced.

Armitage runs into Rugeley, an old coal mining town, and we stopped there for a few days. A power station dominates the

town but two supermarkets are very near. The town itself, despite attempts at regeneration, seemed rather rundown. However, it has some interesting, if gruesome, history. William Palmer, (the Rugeley Prisoner) a murdering GP, was born here. His story has made it to a film and even a Sherlock Holmes tale.

Leaving Rugeley, the canal passes along Brindley Bank, with the River Trent on one side and the town the other. Here is another grisly story of murder, this time by boatmen. Christina Collins was found in the canal at the 'Bloody Steps', just before an aqueduct over the River Trent. The boatmen were convicted of rape and murder. This tale was used in a Morse TV drama.

Out in the Staffordshire countryside again, we had been offered a meal and later a mooring at The Taft, well-known by passing boaters and Boaters Christian Fellowship members. Then we moved on to Great Haywood Junction. This is very familiar, from the years we had our boat share in *Twelfth Night*, and as we climbed the two locks, I reflected on more history.

Set back from the canal before them is

the Wolseley Arms, where reputedly the proprietors of the canal met prior to the Enablement Act for the canal. Shugborough Hall, once the home of Lord Lichfield, is most noticeable on the towpath side and with good moorings, is accessible for boaters and well worth a visit.

Above Haywood Lock there are extensive moorings and we found a place near to the junction with the Staffs & Worcestershire Canal. With a café by the lock and an excellent farm shop and café, we stopped for a few days. We were a little excited, as we planned to turn onto the Staffs & Worcs, returning to a canal we thought of as our 'home' canal when we had *Twelfth Night*, based at Gailey.

CB

FIONA AND JOHN SLEE

After many years of hiring and then owning a share, we commissioned our 57ft narrowboat, *Epiphany*. We took the long-term view and designed her as a liveaboard. Then I gave up work, and now we are continually on the move. From the outset, I kept a record on <http://nbepiphany.co.uk>

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Canal
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Lock 71

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On the last leg

**PART
THREE**

Narrow boaters Ian and Jane Ainsworth continued their US trip by searching for manatees, avoiding 'gators, dancing the night away and coping with the swells and capricious weather

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **JANE AINSWORTH**

Sanibel was the most southerly point of our journey down Florida's Gulf Coast. By now we were feeling quite at home on *Carina*, more familiar with the American way of doing things, and more confident about our boat handling skills.

We turned north-east up the Caloosahatchee River which would take us eastwards to Lake Okeechobee, then into the Saint Lucie Canal and on to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), the end-point of this first trip being Jacksonville, where we would store the boat over the summer.

Our first stop was Fort Myers, now a sprawling commercial centre but, in 1885 when it was incorporated, it had just 349 residents. Shortly afterwards, Thomas A. Edison bought 13 acres of land overlooking the river and built a house, *Seminole Lodge*, and a laboratory, and used the house as a winter retreat. A few years later, his great friend Henry Ford purchased the neighbouring lot and built his winter retreat, *The Mangoes*. The two houses are now known as the Edison-Ford Winter Estates, and the audio tour of both houses, the Botanical and

Ornamental Gardens, Ford automobile exhibits, the museum and Edison's laboratory was great value at \$20 per head.

Edison and Ford both had very little formal education and their achievements, dedication and enterprise were all brought out in the exhibition. Edison's imagination and foresight were reflected in a comment he made in 1931. The magazine *Scientific American* had already predicted in grave tones the possible exhaustion of the world's oil supplies. Edison told Ford and their friend Harvey Firestone: "I'll put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait till oil and gas run out before we tackle this." He was 81 years old and still working every day in his laboratory.

We hired a car in Fort Myers to do some exploring. Despite signs everywhere advising us of their presence, and exhorting us not to run over them with the boat propeller, we had still not seen any of Florida's famous manatees, aquatic mammals which are most closely related to elephants. So we set off for Lee County Manatee Park. But,

for some reason, the route to the Park defied the combined strengths of my powers of navigation, the Tom-tom, and Google maps on my iPhone.

As we passed through neighbourhoods that were clearly not the sort of place that visitors usually frequented, and found ourselves for the fourth time heading the wrong way out of Fort Myers, exasperation levels in the driver's seat reached an unprecedented high. "The bloody manatees had better be sitting up doing tricks after this."

Unfortunately, they weren't, and although some swirling water suggested their presence, only one of them deigned to expose a few inches of his back.

Upstream from Fort Myers, the landscape began to change, becoming less tropical and more open grassland. There were locks, too, a great deal larger than those we were accustomed to on the Trent & Mersey, and we were worried that there might be a big surge of water as the lock filled, or that our unfamiliarity with lock etiquette and procedure might be all too apparent. But the lockmasters were all very helpful.

Our last stop before crossing Lake



Port Myaca Lock and railway liftbridge

One of Henry Ford's automobiles



'By 4pm, when thunder and lightning were crashing about us, we were safely moored in the marina with no plans to go anywhere'

Okeechobee was the Roland Martin Marina at Clewiston. After a few nights on fairly isolated moorings at various places along the river, it was good to see some other boaters and enjoy live music and a good meal in the marina's Tiki bar.

Lake Okeechobee is the largest freshwater lake in Florida, covering 730 square miles, and is known as Florida's Inland Sea, or 'the Big O'. Its size and the unpredictability of the weather presented us with the biggest challenge of the trip so far. Rather than cross the lake directly, the usual practice is to follow the channel of the Rim Canal, a channel which runs inside the perimeter of the lake. Even so, you have to pay due attention to the weather forecast and not

The Moonlight Garden at Edison's house



take any unnecessary risks.

The forecast wasn't that great on the day we wanted to leave, with winds of up to 15 knots and moderately choppy waters, and deteriorating in the afternoon. We thought it would take us five hours to get across, so we minimised the risk with a very early morning start, and were rewarded with the beauty and stillness of the lake in the very early morning, with only a few fishermen for company.

The swell got worse, as predicted, and *Carina* does have a tendency to rock and roll in these conditions, but things improved once we got to Port Mayaca Lock, at the start of the St Lucie Canal, and we continued another 10 miles up the canal to Indiantown. We had made

the right decision to leave early. By 4pm, when thunder and lightning were crashing about us, we were safely moored in the marina with no plans to go anywhere the next day in the gale force winds that were forecast.

In fact, the weather in Florida seemed almost as capricious as in Britain. A few days before, with temperatures over 30C, it had been so hot that we had been grateful for *Carina's* air-conditioning. On our second morning at Indiantown, the gales had abated, but we woke shivering to find it was just 7C, and condensation was running down the windows.

Carina has a headroom of 17ft, which means many of the older bridges spanning the waterways are too low for her to pass under. The bridgmaster has to be contacted in advance, and an opening requested. The day's planning usually includes an assessment of the bridges we will pass under, but somehow the Old Roosevelt Bridge, which crosses the St Lucie River near Stuart, had escaped Ian's notice until we were about 50 metres away from it. Fortunately, the bridgmaster responded promptly to Ian's hurried call over the VHF radio.

Finding somewhere nice to anchor often feels like finding somewhere to park the car. We have various guides to the waterway, and there are websites with suggestions from other boaters of suitable places. But we sometimes pootle around for ages, with Ian rejecting several acceptable spots before we

Crossing the huge Lake Okeechobee, also known as "the Big O"



BOATING IN AMERICA

- ◀ finally settle on somewhere which has only minor advantages, if any, over the previous six that have failed inspection.

Hookers Cove, near Stuart, was one of those chosen after a lengthy selection procedure. It was indeed lovely, but contrary to the weather forecast, the wind became quite strong as the evening wore on, until it reached the levels referred to in northern England as blowing a hooley. The water was reasonably deep, so running aground wasn't an issue, but Ian worried instead that the anchor might not hold fast. Tom and Tracey, *Carina's* previous owners, had not bothered with anchor alarms, Tom said. He had preferred to rely on shouts of "Holy shit, Tom!" from Tracey to alert him to possible anchor malfunction. Ian prefers to rely on gadgets so, on this occasion, he set not only the anchor alarm on the laptop but also the Drag Queen app on my phone. He dropped the second reserve anchor for good measure. Unfortunately, the tolerance on the alarms had been set too low, and they went off twice in the middle of the night, though the anchors held fast. We were living and learning.

The next day we left the St Lucie River, turning north up Indian River and, at last, on to the Atlantic ICW.

Between the barrier islands, we had our first glimpse of the Atlantic Ocean, which gave us both a sense of achievement and a feeling of not a little wonder that we had crossed the entire State of Florida from the Gulf of Mexico

The weather looks great,
but it wasn't to last...



to the Atlantic, and for a while, putting the vastness of the North American continent into some kind of perspective.

It was all too easy, with our March deadline in view, to simply get as far as we could each day without absorbing anything about the places we were passing through. I was conscious that it would be a long time before we visited Florida again, and wanted to see as much as we could. The waterway, with its river inlets and island scenery, was pleasant enough, but offered tantalising glimpses of the ocean between the islands.

At Melbourne, I persuaded Ian to stop for a couple of days and hire a car, so we could drive back down the coast to Sebastian Inlet State Park. It proved a good investment of time and money. We walked a 5km trail through the

mangrove beside the river, then crossed back to the beach, alive with hundreds of shorebirds.

A park ranger gave us some insect repellent when he heard we hadn't got any, and advised us about the wildlife. "If you see an alligator on the path, don't try to go past him. Just turn around and go a different way." You bet!. However, the 'gators were having a quiet day.

As we moved north towards Jacksonville, we learned more about Florida's history. We decided to anchor in Matanzas Inlet, so we could visit Fort Matanzas, built in 1742 by the Spanish, to protect their settlement there.

The fort is on Rattlesnake Island, and you can only get there by taking the ferry service provided by the State Parks Service. So we took the dinghy and



Cape Coral railway bridge



parked on the beach near to the jetty. As Florida is flat, there are very few places where you can get anything approaching an aerial view, so it was quite rewarding to climb the steep steps, and then a narrow, almost vertical ladder, to get to the top of the tower.

Later, *Carina* had another surprise for us. In the middle of the night, we woke to a strange gurgling noise coming from underneath the boat. Ian got up to have a look and the diagnosis was that the tide in the inlet was running so fast that the prop was being turned round, but apparently it was one of those situations where there is nothing you can do, so it's best to do nothing.

Further up the coast, St Augustine is the oldest European settlement in the United States, predating Jamestown in Virginia by 42 years, and we had enough time to have four nights there. The city is proud of its Spanish heritage, and was under Spanish rule for nearly 200 years. The Old Town has a very continental feel and there is a lot of Spanish influence in the architecture of the churches and civic buildings.



'Ian got up to have a look and the diagnosis was that the tide in the inlet was running so fast that the prop was being turned round.'

Henry Flagler, a successful businessman, came to Florida in the Gilded Age of the late 19th Century and not only built two opulent hotels, the Alcazar and the Ponce de León, but also bought and developed the railroad that would transport his guests to his hotels. Today the hotels are the Lightner Museum and Flagler College respectively, but you can take a tour round the college and see some of the stunning rooms where the rich met to relax and network with their business associates, and where now the students take their meals.

St Augustine's place in the Civil Rights Movement receives barely a mention in the visitor guide, although one of the

streets is named for Dr Martin Luther King, who came to the city in 1964, and in the Plaza de la Constitucion, there is a plaque to mark the place where Andrew Young, a friend of Martin Luther King, was beaten up.

We discovered that a concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Civil Rights Act was being given by the St Augustine Orchestra in the old Alcazar Hotel and managed to get tickets. The concert was held in what had been the swimming pool, quite magnificent, with columns, balustrades, a high vaulted glass roof, and adorned with palms and flowers. The programme included a specially commissioned oratorio, as well as excerpts from Porgy and Bess, and Maple Leaf Rag.

Our evening didn't end there. We had to pass the San Sebastian Winery on our way back to the marina, and loud funky music was coming from the roof. It was open, so we ventured in, and after the rather sombre atmosphere at the memorial concert, found ourselves dancing the night away to the songs of Van Morrison and the Rolling Stones.

It was almost too much excitement and possibly just as well that the next day, we had to leave for Jacksonville.

We left *Carina* at Holland Marine Boatyard at Green Cove Springs, to have some maintenance work done while we were away, and although by this time I was looking forward to getting home, I knew I'd be excited about coming back to the U.S. in the autumn, to travel up the wild coasts of Georgia and North and South Carolina.



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YOUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WATERWAYS AROUND THE UK

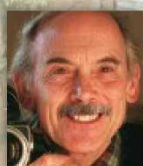
• Easy-to-follow route map • Information for boaters • Ten top pubs guide

**PULL OUT
AND KEEP**



**PART
TWO**

Shropshire Union (North)



In the second of our two-part guide, we follow the older northern section of the Shroppie as it descends through quiet countryside to historic Chester city and on across the Wirral to Ellesmere Port and the National Waterways Museum

TEXT & PICTURES BY **DEREK PRATT**



Cruising past Nantwich Basin



Passing the Middlewich Branch at Barbridge

The first part of our guide to the Shropshire Union ended at Nantwich, where the southern section built by Thomas Telford as the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal ends. This month our northward journey continues on the much older Chester Canal.

Nantwich Basin was the terminus of the Chester Canal, which opened between there and Chester in 1779. Known today as the Nantwich Canal

Centre, the basin is home to a busy marina, a boatyard with hire craft, and a waterside café. As we mentioned last time, there is a lot to see in Nantwich, whose historic town centre can be reached from here by walking along the road that passes beneath the aqueduct.

The canal leaves Nantwich and heads north-westwards through pleasant farming countryside to Hurleston Junction. To our left, four locks act as an overture for the serene journey into

Wales along the Llangollen Canal. Continuing on the Shropshire Union, the next section forms the link between Hurleston and Barbridge junctions and can be very busy with boats making the connection between the Llangollen Canal and the Middlewich Branch.

Barbridge used to have two waterside pubs: the Jolly Tar opposite the Middlewich Branch junction has closed, but the Barbridge Inn is still in business.

Turn right here for the ten-mile long

JOURNEY PLANNER

Follow the route with our map showing distances, locks and pubs

Distances/locks
between pins



Direction
of locks



Tunnel



Waterway
junction



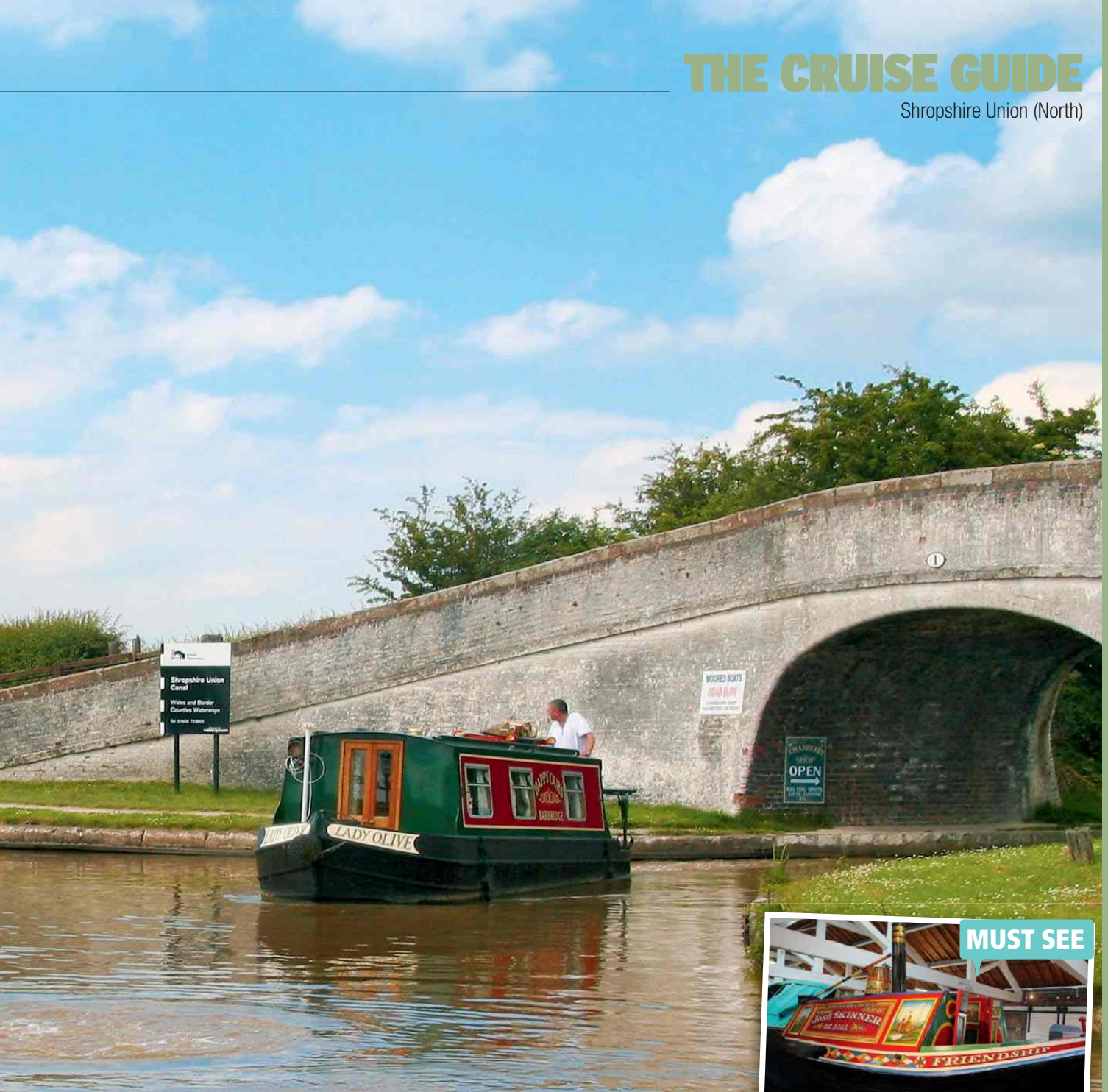
Our top ten pubs
see panel overleaf

NANTWICH

5 MILES NO LOCKS

THE CRUISE GUIDE

Shropshire Union (North)



MUST SEE

Middlewich Branch, which was originally planned as part of the Chester Canal in the 1770s. Unfortunately, the company ran out of money, so building the canal was delayed until 1827. Even then, the Trent & Mersey would not allow any direct connection at Middlewich – so they built the short Wardle Canal (actually a branch of the T&M just a few yards long) to join the two, charging large tolls for traffic passing along it.

Today, the Middlewich Branch offers a

pleasant cruise mostly above the valley of the River Weaver, where you can enjoy wide views towards distant hills. It is open farming countryside with no built up areas until Middlewich, and four locks, two of them at the Middlewich end. Two large marinas provide for all boating requirements and both have restaurants.

Stop at Bridge 14 to visit the village of Church Minshull which boasts a pub and some interesting buildings.

Back at the main line, the canal

THE NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM was founded in 1970 and has a large collection of restored inland waterway craft. There are exhibitions about the history of boat-building, working boats and engines. Don't miss Porter's Row, a terrace of four dock-workers' houses that have been furnished and decorated to represent different periods of time between the 1840s and 1950s. The museum also features a blacksmith's forge. There are boat trips from the quayside by the entrance, a café and bookshop.

LLANGOLLEN

1

BARBRIDGE

MIDDLEWICH BRANCH

2

2 MILES / 5 LOCKS

3

BEESTON

4

THE CRUISE GUIDE

Shropshire Union (South)

10 WATERSIDE PUBS

Canal Boat's pick of watering holes on the Shropshire Union Canal (North)

1 Barbridge Inn Barbridge. 01270 528327.
Near Bridge 100. Large family-friendly pub with local real ales, food, play area and garden

2 Badger Cross Lane, Church Minshull. 01270 522348. 5 mins west of Bridge 14 on Middlewich Branch. Listed historic village pub, real ale, food, traditional pub games and garden

3 Travellers Rest Chester Road, Alraham. 01829 260523. 10 mins north east of Bunbury Locks, left at main road. Unspoilt gem for those just wanting drinks – no food, no music, but real ale and interior unchanged since 1930s

4 Shady Oak Beeston. 01829 730581. At Bridge 109. Recently refurbished country pub with real ale, food and waterside garden

5 Cheshire Cat Christleton. 01244 332200. Canalside at Bridge 120. Traditional country inn, part of the Vintage Inns chain, with real ale, food and garden.

6 Bridge Tarvin Road, Boughton. 01244 312120. West of Bridge 123. Popular community pub recently reopened with good value food, real ale, canalside garden, occasional live music, quiz Sunday and film night Monday

7 Old Harkers Arms Chester. 01244 344525. At Bridge 123B. Smart pub in converted canal warehouse. Big range of real ales and ciders, food and canalside outdoor seating

8 Lock Keeper, Chester. 01244 328064. Near Bridge 123E. Converted warehouse with real ale, food and waterside outdoor seating

9 Telford's Warehouse Chester. 01244 390090. By Tower Wharf. Busy pub in historic warehouse with live music, real ale, annual beer festival, restaurant, outside seating

10 Oddfellows Little Stanney Lane, Stoak. 01244 301665. 5 mins north west of Bridge 136. 17th Century village pub with open fires and low beams. Local real ale, food, patio and garden

Pub details are likely to change at short notice: you are advised to phone ahead to be sure

continues its north-westerly course to Calverley which once featured a trans-shipment wharf between the canal and railway. Today it has a pub and a waterside café complete with cheese shop, which makes it a pleasant place to stop for a while.

Next come the two staircase locks at Bunbury which will keep boaters busy for some time. The locks have a very attractive setting with a boatyard and hire base at the foot of the flight, and a line of well-preserved old stables on one side of the locks. These were once used by the horse-drawn Shroppie fly-boats – non-stop craft carrying urgent or perishable cargoes which connected the Black Country factories to the Mersey

ports and the rest of the Shropshire Union system.

Leaving Bunbury, the canal is accompanied by the River Gowy as it passes through a beautiful wooded section to Tilstone Lock where a mill dating back to the 1830s has been converted to residential use. From Tilstone it is another mile to the two locks at Beeston.

Beeston Stone Lock and Beeston Iron Lock are both overlooked by a high ridge which is topped by Beeston Castle (see inset). The castle is more easily accessible from Wharton's Lock using the Sandstone Trail footpath.

After visiting the castle, return to Bate's Mill where there is an excellent

Minshull Lock on the Middlewich Branch



BEESTON

4

7 MILES / 1 LOCK

waterside pub. Now follows around six miles of open, mostly flat countryside with just the railway and an occasional country lane for company. There are no built-up areas until reaching Egg Bridge at Waverton and only one boatyard at Crow's Nest Bridge 113.

Civilisation returns at Waverton with shops and post office near the canal at Bridge 119. Evidence of former waterside industry becomes increasingly apparent with a number of old mills now converted to other uses. There are splendid examples at Christleton, close to an excellent canalside pub which serves food all day.

Also nearby is the site of the Civil War battle in 1645 at Rowton Moor. There are

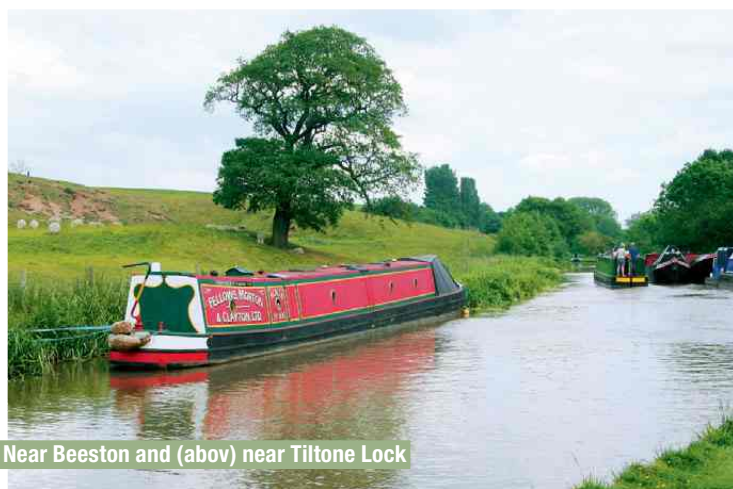
organised tours available in Chester but, for anyone seeking out the battle site on their own, it's a walk from Bridge 120.

Christleton also marks the end of the long lock-free pound since Wharton's Lock. A succession of locks continue the descent into the city of Chester. At first the surroundings are industrial or lined with housing but, soon after Cow Lane Bridge, things start to change as the canal passes through the heart of the city. Now you are in a deep rocky cutting with the ancient city walls high above, topped by King Charles's Tower.

Next come the three Northgate staircase locks followed by a sharp right turn into Tower Wharf. Find a mooring place here to use as a base to visit the



'Now you are in a deep rocky cutting with the ancient city walls high above you, topped by King Charles's Tower'



Near Beeston and (above) near Tiltone Lock



BEESTON CASTLE stands 500ft high on a sandstone cliff above the Cheshire Plain. It was built in the 1220s and was once a royal castle. Although the castle is now in ruins, there is still a lot to see especially the impressive gatehouse. Great views of the surrounding countryside can be enjoyed from the walls.

WAVERTON

5

6

5 MILES / 8 LOCKS

7

8

CHESTER



Wharton's Lock and view of Beeston Castle

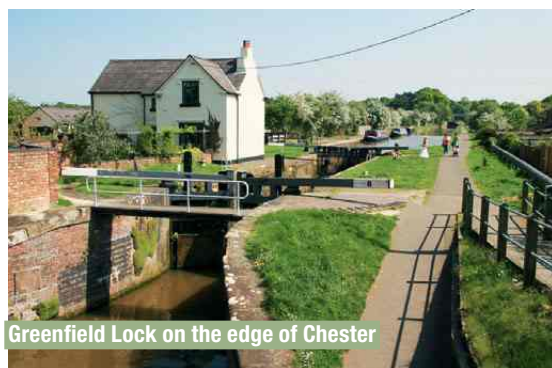


Near Tattenhall

'For many visiting boaters, Chester is the ultimate destination on the Shroppie. However, there are still another eight miles of canal'



Wild flowers at Waverton



Greenfield Lock on the edge of Chester

many attractions in the city (see inset).

Back at Tower Wharf you can visit Telford's Warehouse which has been converted to a restaurant, exhibition site and music venue. Also at Tower Wharf, look out for a plaque which commemorates LTC (Tom) Rolt, the inland waterways pioneer who was born in Chester. It can be found by a boatyard near the entrance to the Dee Branch.

This branch drops down to the River Dee through three wide locks. It's currently subject to an IWA-backed scheme to put it back into good navigable order and to make access to the Dee easier but, in the meantime, if time permits, take a walk down the towpath to see Chester's riverside.

For many boating visitors, Chester is the ultimate destination on the Shropshire Union. However, there are still another eight miles of canal beyond Chester, with Ellesmere Port's Boat Museum at the terminus making the extra effort worthwhile. And

historically speaking, we're now on yet another canal.

The Wirral Line opened in 1797 as part of the planned Ellesmere Canal. It made a connection from the Chester Canal to the River Mersey (and much later the Manchester Ship Canal) at the new town of Ellesmere Port, originally conceived as

SEE ALSO

CHESTER is a beautiful city where there is a lot to see.

Start with a walk along the city walls where at times you can see the canal far below. Then there is the enormous cathedral where, in 1842, Handel heard the first public performance of his *Messiah*. Just walking along the streets is a pleasure, with the famous Chester Rows and Eastgate with its overhanging clock. There are plenty of shops, pubs and restaurants.



the outlet for the Ellesmere Canal – hence its name. However, the Ellesmere Canal was never completed: the section from Chester to Ruabon wasn't built; plans were changed for the length south of there, and it ended up as what is known today as the Llangollen Canal.

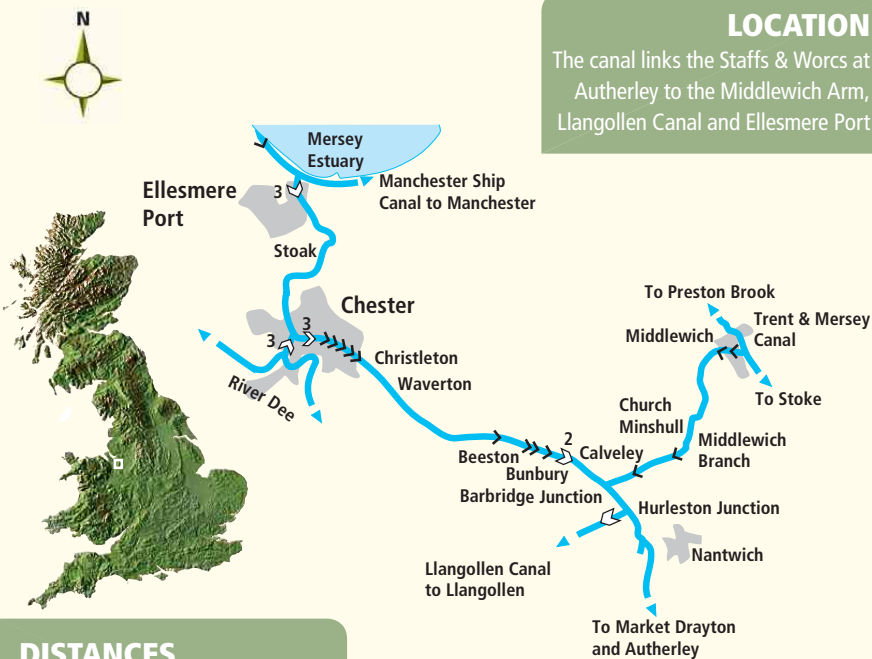
After leaving Tower Wharf the canal at first passes through an area of housing estates before Chester's suburbs are finally left behind and the waterway heads out into the countryside. Despite its rural appearance, this route was busy with boats carrying oil from the Mersey refineries to the industrial Midlands as late as the mid 1950s.

Consider a stop at Bridge 134 for a short walk to Chester Zoo, one of the largest in Britain with a huge collection of animals from all over the world.

Next comes a flurry of motorway interchanges that almost overwhelm the small village of St Oak. Nevertheless, it might be worth a stop here to visit the old village pub which is well known for



THE ROUTE



LOCATION

The canal links the Staffs & Worcs at Autherley to the Middlewich Arm, Llangollen Canal and Ellesmere Port

DISTANCES

Northern main line Nantwich to Ellesmere Port 28 miles 17 locks;
Middlewich Branch 10 miles 4 locks

WATERWAYS FACTFILE

BOATYARD SERVICES



Nantwich Canal Centre 01270 625122



Midway, Barbridge 01270 528682



Venetian, Cholmondeston 01270 528682



Aqueduct Church Minshull 01270 525041



Anglo Welsh Bunbury 01829 260957



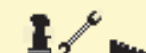
Chas Harden, Tiverton 01829 732595



Crow's Nest Boat Service, 01829 772592



Workshop, Christleton 01244 332633



JP Marine, Chester 01244 379922



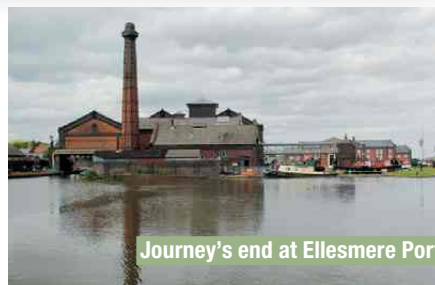
Canal & River Trust Chester Yard



Ellesmere Port Museum 0151 355 5017



Chester city walls tower over the canal



Journey's end at Ellesmere Port

its food and real ale.

After Stoak, the final three miles to Ellesmere Port are dominated by the Stanlow refineries. A motorway on one side and a mixture of oil refineries, industry and wasteland on the other might not make the entrance to Ellesmere Port very attractive. But it's worth it for the arrival at the canal's terminus, surrounded by the restored buildings and basins which form the National Waterways Museum (see inset).

For intrepid boaters, three final locks lead down through the basins to the Manchester Ship Canal, for the passage

to Manchester or across the Mersey estuary to Liverpool. For the rest, it's a fitting finale to the long journey along the Shropshire Union Canal.



TELL US ABOUT YOUR CRUISE

Our next Cruise Guide (May issue, on sale 30 March) visits the River Medway Navigation – and we want to hear from you. Tell us your experiences of the river and any hints, tips or places to visit so that we can pass them on to others. We'd like to see your pictures too, so do drop us an email to editor@canalboat.co.uk



4 MILES / 3 LOCKS

ELLESMERE PORT

CANAL BOAT PUB OF

Winners all!

You voted and now we can reveal your top three pubs – but we reckon every pub that was nominated deserves an honourable mention, too

There are a great bunch of pubs out there on the waterways – you only have to look at the long list of pubs on the right that received nominations for our first Pub of the Year awards to see that.

In fact, selecting the final three was very difficult – yes, of course the number of nominations each received played a major part in our deliberations, but we also read all the comments you made about your favourite watering holes and why they

should be voted as our first-ever Canal Boat Pub of the Year.

Many pubs have had a pretty tough time over the last few years and we hope that our awards will help give every waterways pub out there a boost – and you, of course, can play your part simply by stopping for a drink and perhaps something to eat as you go about your travels this year. Then you can vote for your favourite in the Canal Boat Pub of the Year Awards 2016. We look forward to receiving your nominations.



THE GREYHOUND INN HAWKESBURY JUNCTION

“This pub must be one of the favourites; what a great position with the meeting of the Oxford and Coventry canals with a large frontage overlooking both, with many tables for al fresco eating and a restaurant second to none. We pass several times in our narrowboat each year so it has always been one of our highlights of the trip.”

When we visited The Greyhound Inn to deliver its Top Pub award it was easy to see why it had been so highly recommended. There was a warm welcome, not just for us but for everyone who came in on that cold January day. Log fires were warming the atmosphere, not that it needed it, the bar and restaurant were heaving – and we were delighted to hear the chatter include much boating talk. A worthy winner.

Receiving the award, Landlord Leigh Watts said: “We are delighted to receive this recognition from the readers of *Canal Boat* as our customer base is made up from a diverse range of local people and visitors from the canal network and it's always so nice to know that they feel that a warm welcome always awaits them here.

“We always look forward to seeing people when they are passing by again so that we can catch up with what's been happening with them since the last time we got the opportunity to see them.”

THE YEAR AWARDS



THE ADMIRAL NELSON GRAND UNION, BRAUNSTON

“*The dedicated proprietors rescued a failing pub that changed hands many times and was doomed. They put on regular events such as the music festival. An integral part of the Canal Community.***”**

Buying a pub that had never quite worked was a brave move as the nomination shows. Now, four

years on with The Admiral Nelson so well established, we're delighted it featured so highly. It's a tribute to Pam, Mark and Liam that the pub is so highly thought of – mind you, when we visited it was obvious it was a great place to eat, drink and relax. Receiving their award, Pam said: “We'd like to say a big thank-you to everyone who took the time out to vote for us; we were blown away – it was most unexpected.”



THE BARGE INN, HONEYSTREET KENNET & AVON

“*A great place where people from all walks of life have a fantastic time. You can moor right outside and enjoy the festival atmosphere every weekend. The food is good, the beer even better. You might even meet an alien or see a crop circle!***”**

Yes, well... the aliens appeared to have taken over

our Pub of The Year voting inbox for a while, but after we had zapped their messages it was clear that this was a favourite, if rather unusual (have a look at their website the-barge-inn.com and you'll see what we mean) pub stop for many people.

Over the years The Barge has had a few difficult times and we're delighted to see that it seems to be settling down. As we went to press, it was under refurbishment, too.

Roll of honour

THE NOMINATIONS

THE AQUEDUCT INN, Fronsycyllte, Llangollen
 THE BOAT INN, Thrupp, Oxford
 WATER WITCH, Lancaster, Lancaster
 THE WATERFRONT, Pewsey, Kennet & Avon
 THE ANCHOR, High Offley, Shropshire Union
 THE NARROWBOAT PUB, London, Regent's
 COTTON ARMS, Wrenbury, Llangollen
 LEGGERS INN, Dewsbury Arm, Calder & Hebble
 QUEEN'S HEAD, Worcester & Birmingham
 CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, Warwick, Grand Union
 THE NAVIGATION, Maesbury, Montgomery
 THE KING'S LOCK, Middlewich, Trent & Mersey
 THE ROWBARGE, Woolhampton, Kennet & Avon
 THE BARLEY MOW, Newbold on Avon, Oxford
 RISING SUN, Berkhamsted, Grand Union
 THE SWAN, Stone, Trent & Mersey
 WEAVERS REAL ALE HOUSE, Kidderminster, Staffs & Worcs
 NAG'S HEAD, Great Linford, Grand Union
 SALT BARGE, Northwich, Trent & Mersey
 THE WATERFRONT, Market Harborough, GU
 DUNDAS ARMS, Kintbury, Kennet & Avon
 WHARF INN, Fenny Compton, Oxford
 RAILWAY INN, Droitwich Spa, Droitwich
 THE FOLLY, Napton Bottom Lock, Oxford
 THE WEIGHBRIDGE, Alvechurch, Worcester & Birmingham
 HOLLY BUSH INN, Denford, Caldon
 THE RED LION, Crick, Grand Union Leicester Line
 THE OPEN HEARTH, Griffithstown, Mon & Bre
 THE FOUNTAIN INN, Tipton, BCN
 THE CUNNING MAN, Burghfield, Kennet & Avon
 FLEUR DE LYS, Lowsonford, Stratford-upon-Avon
 THE WATERSIDE INN, Mountsorrel, River Soar
 CAMP HOUSE INN, Grimley, River Severn
 BLACK HORSE, Nassington, River Nene
 THE CROSS GUNS, Avoncliff, Kennet & Avon
 BARBRIDGE INN, Barbridge, Shropshire Union



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ROOFTOP GARDENING with Julie Clark

After what has got to have been one of the windiest and warmest winters ever – not to mention the floods – I am hoping we can relax just a little as April approaches and get back to a bit of normal gardening.

April is usually the month of go, go, go and get those seeds planted! So, gales permitting and as long as winter does not decide to arrive, plenty of seeds can be planted now.

Over the last couple of months I have been checking through the 2016 seed catalogues looking for something new to grow on the boat, especially in the food department. This year Mr Fothergill's Seeds have the most amazing selection of salad leaves, surely one of the easiest and fastest growing crops to try. Choose from watercress Aqua which does not need running water and thrives in pots, or mustard Oriental Ruby with deep red hot and spicy leaves to use in salads and stir-fry recipes; or grow the



cool lemony flavoured leaves of red sorrel, a delicious addition to summer soups.

Pick the leaves when tiny after a few weeks or leave them to mature and develop stronger flavours. Grow in succession and try them all, there were about 20 different varieties to choose from. I also found a new variety of dwarf French bean var, Mascotte. Tiny plants ideally suited for container growing which, if well fed and watered, will produce an abundance of pods.

Alternatively, you could go for a dwarf stringless runner bean var. Jackpot Mixed (pictured). If it is still very cold, these beans will appreciate being started undercover and planted out in May.

The pollination of beans can be a problem if you do a lot of travelling so it is a good idea to have some nice nectar rich flowers growing nearby to attract insects.

I have just been lucky enough to visit the Royal Academy's exhibition: Painting the Modern Garden. What a delight and inspiration. Of course, we are so fortunate in our boating life to see at close hand the beauty of nature around us that it almost seems anathema to try to replicate it artificially – but I'll give it a good go!

I have already noted some lovely plants for the summer that will be ideal for growing on my little boat. I envisage pots full of Angeolina, a compact but branching plant with sprays of pink, mauve and white flowers which keep going throughout the summer and well into the autumn, or perhaps some of the new varieties of antirrhinum such as Antiquity Mix, a strong growing dwarf bicoloured variety of pink and white with the added bonus of open flowers (good for the bees) and a delightful fragrance. Snapdragons have really changed.

So now my salad seeds are planted and next month it will be time to get all arty with the flowers.

CB



THE BIG SKY WITH SEB JAY



Look to the sky in a south-easterly direction on any clear April evening and you'll be peering out far beyond the borders of our own galaxy. Out there, in deep space, exists a vast network of star-islands – other galaxies containing billions of stars visible only through a telescope.

If we look at one particular patch of sky near the bright yellow star Arcturus, we'll hit upon the Coma Supercluster of galaxies. This is a collection of more than 1,000 star-islands so far away that, if we were to travel on a beam of light from the comfort of our gently swaying boats, it would take us more than 320 million years to get there, or just a bit longer than the time it takes to get down the Kennet & Avon to Bath in the height of summer!

Kidding aside, just for a moment, let's imagine there is an advanced civilisation on a planet in the Coma Supercluster. If this civilisation had a really massive telescope powerful enough to peer back at us, they would see no humans at all. Instead they'd see Earth, in real time, as it was 320 million years ago when dinosaurs roamed the planet.

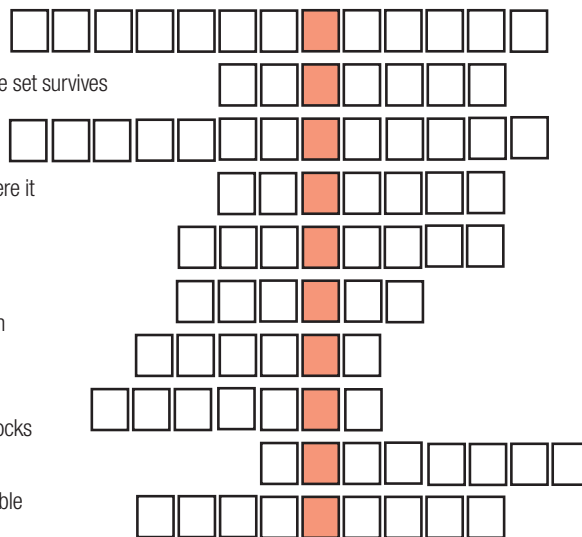
The Coma Galaxy Cluster comprises of more than a thousand galaxies at a distance of 320 million light years away. Image Seb Jay.



WATERWAYS ACROSTIC

Name a flight of locks on the Birmingham Canal Navigations system which...

- Includes the only staircase locks on the BCN
- Used to be duplicated, but only one set survives
- Runs right through the middle of Birmingham
- Is on the New Main Line, near where it meets the Old Main Line
- Was nicknamed 'The Ganseys' by working boat people
- Features a former boaters' mission alongside the top lock
- Leads to Dudley Tunnel
- Has a tunnel between two of the locks
- Consists of 21 locks
- Comprises the oldest three navigable locks on the BCN



Fit your answers into the grid, so that the letters in the red box spell out another BCN lock flight.

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

Braunston, Stoke Bruerne, Marsworth, Cosgrove, Shrewley, Berkhamsted, Rickmansworth, Knowle, Brentford, Warwick, Putting them in the grid in the right order spells out the final answer: Batchworth



ON TEST

Small is beautiful

If you thought you might lose a lot by buying a short boat, that's not necessarily the case as we found with Aintree's little Beetle

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **NICK WALL**

What do you do if you have £36,000 or so to buy a boat with? The obvious answer is to go and look for a good second-hand craft that you like and meets your needs.

But suppose you want something new and you're not worried about having a big boat? Then your options open up

even further, which is exactly what Steve and Liza Goodchild did.

They started boating back in 1988 and followed the traditional route of hiring for many years as their family grew up before finally deciding to take the plunge and buy one of their own. They looked at second-hand boats but found there was always something they didn't quite like

about those they saw – they didn't meet their needs, required too much work or didn't have the 'buy-me' factor.

Then, in 2014, they saw an advertisement for Aintree's diminutive four-berth Beetle. While they weren't particularly looking for a small boat, they decided to have a look at one but, at 25ft, it simply wasn't big enough for the boating they wanted to do which would be weekends with the occasional extended trip of a week or so.

A year later they went back again, this time to look at a 30-footer the company



Froxfield

£39,950

LENGTH:	30ft
STYLE:	Cruiser
BERTHS:	2+2
LAYOUT:	Trad
POWER:	Beta 30

was producing and, while they liked the extra room the additional five feet offered, they weren't keen on the layout, particularly the centre section where the bathroom was across the width of the boat with a small corridor alongside, followed by a fifth, single, bunk. With no need for the extra bunk or a larger bathroom, they simply said "can't we have the 25-footer's layout (which had a small shower room to one side of the boat) stretched to provide extra room and storage?". And that's when it all clicked.

The design hadn't been finalised and

Aintree simply said "Yes". It meant that the two dinettes which became beds could be three inches longer, making them more comfortable, the main bed could be 6ft 2in long and there would be more room for the galley, wardrobe and storage – and it's a design that works well.

Four steps take you down into the boat which is immediately a light, bright space, in part due to the light oak trim, cream walls and neutral fabrics, but also because there's nothing from front to rear to stop the light flooding from the glazed front door down the length of the

interior to the rear, which the centre bathroom might have done.

If you're tall like me and Stephen, what also strikes you immediately is the headroom; it's tempting to think that the dimensions of a smaller boat would reflect in a lower ceiling height, but they don't – at a lofty 6ft 2in, I could stand comfortably inside, which adds to the sense of space and it's an important point because no-one wants to feel cramped, particularly in a shorter boat.

The layout of *Froxfield* is simple. Either side of the steps there are two



Saloon offers space and storage, plus a good night's sleep; right, there are two dining tables



well cushioned dinettes (one with a TV above) each of which comfortably seats two with a decent sized table. Both dinettes are slightly raised, both for storage underneath and to provide a good view out through the windows. The tables drop to convert to single berths.

These are followed on the right by a reasonably sized sealed wet room with a mixer shower and Thetford cassette loo, washbasin with mixer taps, a bulkhead mirror and extractor fan. It's not huge but, as Stephen says, you don't actually need to spend much time in there so why waste space? Next to this there's a large wardrobe, an important point if you're thinking of cruising for a week or three, and a separate storage cupboard with the galley opposite on the left.

This has a combined double-burner hob and sink unit under a pair of glass lids, inset under a large work surface (those extra five feet again), while underneath there's a combined gas oven and grill, with storage below and a good-sized Waeco fridge with a freezer compartment. Three large drawers provide plenty of room for storage.

Forward of this is the saloon/cabin with twin settees either side that turn into the 6ft 2in double bed without too much hassle; doors provide access to storage space underneath. Two low-level cupboards against the forward bulkhead provide more storage, while the step gives access to the water tank and fresh water pump, as well as further storage.

Through the glazed double front doors in the bow there's a small well deck with two small seats, a storage locker, a 100-litre water tank underneath the deck and, of course, a T-stud.

At the rear there's a small squared-off cruiser stern that's comfortable for two with a seating rail and engine control. A small hatch provides access to a Beta 30hp engine (Steve and Liza actually asked for 20hp, but a 30hp model turned up...), a 50-litre calorifier and Vetus stern

'The sealed wet room isn't huge but, as Stephen says, you don't actually need to spend much time in there so why waste space?'

Shower room looks perfect





Rear half of the boat is well thought through

gland, while another hatch gives access to the gas bottle.

Heating is provided by an Eberspächer Airtronic 2.2kW warm air heater mounted in the engine room, with ducts that draw in cabin air and resupply it to outlets both aft and forward in the cabin. The electrical supply comes from two 135kW batteries for the domestics and there's a 110kW battery for the engine. A Victron Multiplus Compact 800W inverter provides 240v power.

If all this sounds a lot that's because it is – just because something is small, that doesn't mean it can't be fitted with all that a boat needs.

Outside, the exterior itself looks exactly as it should. The paintwork is excellent, with red sides and cream pinstriping to match the roof and it absolutely looks the part, even down to the pole and plank holder. Four chrome mushroom vents set off the colour scheme nicely and, even though this is a short boat and mooring won't be difficult,



Extra few feet provides a wardrobe

there's even a centre mooring ring. There is also a small 40W solar panel.

Unsurprisingly at just 30ft, it handles well, too. The tiller is light and, as we proved for our photoshoot, at 30ft it will turn just about anywhere. With the 30hp engine it almost felt as if *Froxfield* was slightly over-powered and it seemed happy to cruise at just 900/1,000rpm on the Staffs & Worcester but, pop it on a river, and you'd probably be grateful for those few extra horses.

What really surprised me about this

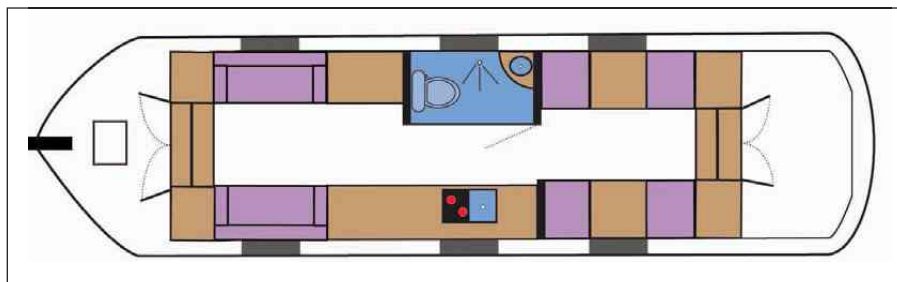


Neat sink and hob, oven below

boat is that if you're building a small boat at a budget price there must be a temptation to, perhaps, scale things down in the build quality too, and that most definitely isn't the case here.

This was a production boat, with a tweak to the interior layout, that was very solidly built, using good materials – it has the quality of build and equipment we'd expect to find in a much larger, more expensive boat. In essence, it's simply a well built perfectly formed narrowboat that just happens to be a bit shorter than many others, and that's quite a feat.

With a small boat such as this it's tempting to simply use the *Tardis* cliché, that there's a lot more going on inside than you see from the outside, but that wouldn't be enough even if it's true. What Steve and Liza have found, and designed to suit themselves for £35,950, is a boat that suits them and their boating. For the price, I think it's a little cracker. **CB**





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Who gives a dam?



An odd lock with an odd name in a remote part of the Fenlands – who cares about it? The equally oddly named Project Hereward group, which aims to put it back on the map

WORDS & PICTURES BY MARTIN LUDGATE



Welches Dam Lock: officially still open but it hasn't seen a boat in ten years

A 'Welches Dam' sounds like a colloquial expression implying a complete lack of interest – like a 'tinker's cuss' (or various less polite expressions). It is, in reality, the name of a lock connecting the Old Bedford River to the Forty Foot Drain in the Middle Level Fenlands. But when you look at the derelict, overgrown chamber, the dry channel below it, the crude steel-piled dam above it, and remind yourself it's not only legally navigable but was in use a decade ago you can't help thinking that's quite apt. Who, indeed, gives a Welches Dam about it? Well, it's not obvious the navigation

authority the Environment Agency is too concerned about its (illegal) state. But one group that cares very much is an organisation called Project Hereward.

This curious name recalls Hereward the Wake, 11th Century Fenland rebel – and has been applied to a series of waterway improvements since the 1990s. First came Project Hereward 1, a campaign to get the locks on the usual through route across the Middle Level from Nene to Great Ouse lengthened to take full-length narrowboats.

Next was the more ambitious Project Hereward 2: this morphed into the Fens Link, an EA-supported scheme to create

an inland route all the way from the Witham to the Nene near Peterborough – with options to continue via various proposed improvements to the route to the Great Ouse, including everything from an aqueduct across the tideway at Denver to a new cut through Chatteris.

This got off to a fine start with a new lock in Boston, reopening the Black Sluice Drain to navigation in 2009. Sadly, it then stalled due to shortage of money, with no practical progress on the next stage, linking the Black Sluice to the Rivers Glen and Welland which, in turn, would be linked to the Nene.

If progress from the north end of the ►



The top of the lock showing the piling dam



Project Hereward volunteers (photo: Mike Daines)

◀Fens Link was slow, things were worse further south. Use of the alternative route across the Middle Level via the Forty Foot Drain, Horseyway and Welches Dam locks and the Old Bedford River, came to an abrupt end when the head of Welches Dam Lock was piled off in 2006.

This was done in a hurry by the EA's land drainage department, because of concerns about the poor state of the lock. Ten years on, despite the route being legally navigable, and despite both objections to its closure and offers to help restore the lock from IWA and others, the steel piles are still in place. And the length of the Forty Foot from Welches Dam to Horseyway Lock, which had long suffered from leakage (latterly it was only refilled and made navigable on occasional weekends), is dry and full of weeds.

Horseyway Lock, on the other hand, which is owned not by the EA but (like most of the Middle Level) by the Middle Level Commissioners, is still maintained in sound condition even though it never sees a boat.

Frustrated at the lack of progress on either reopening Welches Dam or creating the Fens Link, a group of local waterways supporters with a great deal of experience from earlier projects (including Hereward 1 and 2) have set up Project Hereward 3: the aim being to assemble funds, permission and expertise to reopen Welches Dam Lock.

But before we look at how they aim to do it, let's ask why. Sure, it's frustrating to see a perfectly good navigable waterway allowed to fall derelict – but what's the attraction of a through-route consisting of two long, straight and, on the face of it, not terribly interesting waterways, when there's the alternative of Well Creek, an attractive route passing through Upwell and Outwell villages?

Roger Sexton of Project Hereward lists a whole series of reasons. Firstly, it's an important alternative route: sooner or later, Well Creek will need major work, as its banks are suffering from long-term after-effects of the roads running along them having been widened back in the

1930s, and will need rebuilding. Without Welches Dam, the only inland route to the Great Ouse could be cut off for some time. In addition, while the Welches Dam route has shorter locks, it doesn't have such low bridges as Well Creek.

Secondly, there's the heritage angle: the first of these waterways were created in the early days of the Fen drainage in the 17th Century, and pre-date the main canal age by well over 100 years. Thirdly, there's the local amenity value – the town of Chatteris isn't far away, and there are footpaths alongside whole route. And finally, there's the considerable nature value of the waterways, which link up with other conservation sites.

So having established that it's worth doing, what's involved in reopening the lock? Well, the first problem is actually getting permission from the Environment Agency (whose resources are severely stretched by Government cuts and the more pressing demands of flood control) to even look at the problems. It's taken six months so far to try to negotiate



By contrast Horseyway Lock is in good condition. (The skeletal-looking bottom gates are a result of changes to water levels since it was built.)



access, but Roger hopes in the not too distant future to get an engineer into the lock to investigate, plan its repair, and agree methodology for work with the EA.

Until then it's not possible to estimate the work needed – but Project Hereward feel it's likely to be largely patching and re-pointing brickwork, and well within

'Project Hereward feel it's likely to be largely patching and re-pointing brickwork, and well within the capability of volunteers'

the capability of volunteers. Project Hereward's own working party, which has been occupying itself with vegetation clearance on the banks of the Forty Foot, includes not only veterans from the 1970s Well Creek restoration, but also a retired professor of engineering. And Waterway Recovery Group is seen as a likely source of extra volunteers.

And as for funding, there is already £15,000 in the coffers; the possibility of matching grants, and with volunteer labour, Roger reckons it could be enough.

But that's only the start. Next, the infamous line of piles would need to go – which means more discussions, as they were put in with such a rush that there

were no records made, and the EA is cautious about taking them out.

Then there's the mile of dry channel from Welches Dam to Horseway. The gravelly ground makes waterproofing it tricky – and bringing in traditional clay would be prohibitively expensive. So the solution is likely to involve a modern lining material, as used elsewhere (such as the Wendover and the Shrewsbury & Newport). It depends on finance and more permissions, and Roger reckons it's probably at least two to three years off.

That would reopen the through route, but boats heading to or from the Great Ouse system would still have to use the short tidal length from the Old Bedford entrance sluice to Denver Sluice – only possible when the tide makes a level.

Might the Welches Dam restoration be a step towards creating a route that avoids this tidal passage? For the long term, Project Hereward is looking at the idea of boats passing through Welches Dam and turning not left but right...

The Old Bedford is navigable for a short way south to Mepal before it becomes too small, changing its name to the Counter Drain on its way.

Could it be made navigable all the way to meet the Great Ouse at Earith? It would need enlarging, a diversion and new bridge for a minor road, extending by $\frac{3}{4}$ mile at the Earith end, and a new lock and bridge to take it into the river. But the basic channel is there for most of the way, and the culvert under the A142 looks just big enough for navigation.

One day, with the Fens Link complete, it could form part of an inland route from Lincoln to Bedford. Combined with the proposed Bedford to Milton Keynes link, it could be part of a wide-beam north-south route and a great Eastern Ring.

And maybe one day, plenty of people will give a damn about Welches Dam! **CB**



With spring in the air, both frogs and herons head for traditional or favourite breeding sites, explains Pip Webster

“Glancing amid the water bright, And sending upward sparkling light” (William Wordsworth), look out for frogs swimming at the edge of the canal. Having spent the winter hibernating in mud at the bottom of ponds and ditches, they emerge to head for their breeding grounds in March.

Like all amphibians, they have to return to water to reproduce, even though they may spend most of the rest of the year living in damp undergrowth on land. Having made a big effort, they generally remain in the water until the weather warms up later in April.

Preferred spawning sites are ponds that have water flowing in and out, and canals, where they gather in large numbers, especially on mild damp nights. The males usually congregate first and begin calling for the females in a croaking chorus. When a female arrives, she is grabbed by a male who jumps on her back and wraps his forelimbs round her body just below the armpits. In order to hold on to his slippery



Froggie went a-courting

partner, nuptial pads of thickened, rough skin have developed on his thumbs allowing a tight grip on rough patches on the female's sides.

Spawning itself takes place in the water: the female lays over 2,000 black eggs which are immediately fertilised by sperm released by the male. At first the spawn sinks down into the water, but as their gelatinous capsules absorb water and swell up, large clumps float to the surface. The female wanders off, leaving her offspring to their fate, and the male looks around for another female. Frogs reach sexual maturity at three to four years, and usually return to the same breeding site each year.

There is only one common frog species found in Britain though, from the range of colour

and markings, you would be forgiven for thinking that there are many. The skin ranges from a pale greenish-grey, through bright yellow to a dark, olive brown; and it can be marked with speckles in black, brown or red.

The frog can change the colour of its skin by manipulating dark pigment cells scattered over its body: it darkens in cold and damp weather. The pale underside camouflages it against the light from underwater predators.

Frogs live on a diet of invertebrates. Slugs and worms are favourites, but insects may also be caught. In their turn, adult frogs are a welcome food source for many larger fish and birds.

Next to the mute swan, the grey heron is our largest common bird with a wing span of 5-6 ft. Look for “those

grey stilted watchers” (Tennyson) standing motionless in the shallow water at the edge of the canal, waiting for prey to come within stabbing range of its long orange-yellow bill.

The victim, usually a fish or an amphibian, though sometimes a small mammal or young bird, is swallowed whole, indigestible bits being regurgitated in a pellet.

Heron are generally solitary birds. At either end of the day, they commute between resting and feeding grounds, flying high overhead with slow, heavy wingbeats. In order for the one metre tall grey heron to fly, it has to double its neck back on itself and, in the air, its feet trail far behind its body.

To breed, they congregate in large colonies or heronries, returning to traditional sites which may have been used for centuries. Peak egg-laying is around the end of March. Looking incongruous at the top of tall trees, the young remain in the nest for almost two months – a noisy and rather smelly sight.



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Walking on arms

The Grand Union Canal's Aylesbury and Wendover arms might look like twins on the map – but take a pleasant walk along them and you'll find two very different waterways

TEXT AND PICTURES BY **MARTIN LUDGATE**

If I'd been writing this walk a few years ago, I'd have begun by explaining how to find the none-too-obvious Aylesbury canal basin. All that has changed thanks to a town centre regeneration involving the new Waterside Theatre with the canal at its centre.

It might not be to everyone's taste, but you can find it easily and it's a good place to start. There's parking nearby, and it's a short walk from the station.

Follow the towpath and you're soon back in more traditional surroundings, a line of town houses backing on to the canal as it heads purposefully out on a straight course. Soon you reach the first of 16 locks on the Arm – and like all of them, it's a narrow-beam lock.

It isn't just the locks that are narrow: apart from a couple of road crossings in Aylesbury, almost every bridge on the Arm is a surviving original narrow-beam

brick arch. Only just surviving, in some cases: the local drivers seem to make a habit of trying to demolish them.


Passing a new housing development which is expanding the town eastwards, you leave Aylesbury behind for a quiet length through flat countryside with no locks for almost two miles. The towpath can get muddy at times, so boots are a good idea especially in winter. A couple more locks are followed on the right by a huge new dairy (thankfully shielded by earth banks from the canal), then there's another quiet length.

The Arm continues eastward with the gradient gradually steepening as you approach the Chiltern slopes. Another pair of locks is followed after half-a-mile by the start of a series of nine, culminating in a staircase pair leading to Marsworth Junction where you turn right onto the Grand Union Main Line. Marsworth

boasts two pubs and a tearoom, so it's handy for a halfway break for those doing the full 14 mile walk. Alternatively, if your legs are weary, there are buses back to Aylesbury from the Angler's Retreat pub, just down the road from Marsworth Bottom Lock.

On the Grand Union Main Line the nature of the walk changes, the locks are broad-beam and the whole canal is on a bigger scale as it snakes its way up the seven Marsworth Locks. Just to your right are two of the reservoirs which keep this southern length of the Grand Union topped up.

Above the top lock is another junction, and another opportunity to end your walk: carry straight on to the Grand Junction Arms and you can enjoy a drink while you wait for a bus back to town. Those continuing the walk should turn sharp right onto the Wendover Arm. The

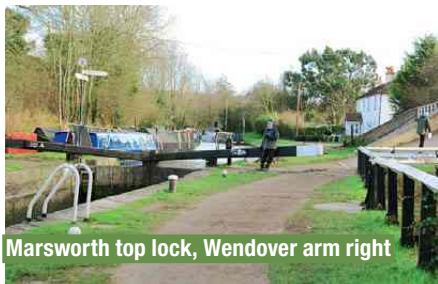


Attractive setting of Lock 4, Aylesbury Arm

Aylesbury & Wendover arms



New developments around Aylesbury Basin



Marsworth top lock, Wendover arm right



Unrestored length of the Wendover Arm near Bucklandwharf

Aylesbury and Wendover arms might be close neighbours, but they're as different as chalk and cheese. That's an appropriate comparison, as the chalk of the Chilterns had a major influence...

While the Aylesbury was built straight and direct, you'll soon notice that your walk along the Wendover twists and turns as it follows the contours, winding its way around the outskirts of Tring. And there's a reason for that: it wasn't built to link Wendover to the network, but to bring in a water supply from the Chiltern chalk streams.

Unfortunately, the chalk was also the canal's undoing, as you'll find out a little further on. Passing a pumping station that still feeds the canal, the Arm passes through an old stop-lock and a bridge before coming to an abrupt end.

This is where navigation ceases: the porous chalk soil meant parts of the Arm leaked so badly that it was losing more water than it was bringing in. Eventually, the canal company gave up and dammed

it off, but they still needed the water supply from Wendover, so they laid a pipeline in the canal bed for two miles.

Now, however, Wendover Arm Trust volunteers are working to bring the canal back to Wendover – and you'll see plenty of signs of their work as you amble along. But first you'll have to detour around a short filled-in length. Go back to the bridge by the stop-lock and follow the road north for a couple of hundred yards: it comes alongside the dry canal and you can return to the towpath.

Look out on the offside for the remains of an old pumping station and overflow system – there's an interpretation sign explaining how it all worked – and then, before long, the canal's back in water all

the way to Wendover. And despite its unnavigable state, the towpath is slightly less muddy than the Aylesbury Arm.

There are great views to the left of the Chiltern Hills and to the right of the Vale of Aylesbury, as open country alternates with tree-lined lengths. The villages of Drayton Beauchamp, Bucklandwharf and Halton add interest as the canal gradually approaches Wendover.

The narrow channel briefly broadens out into 'The Wides' – now a nature reserve with kingfishers and other water birds – before approaching the small terminus basin on the edge of Wendover.

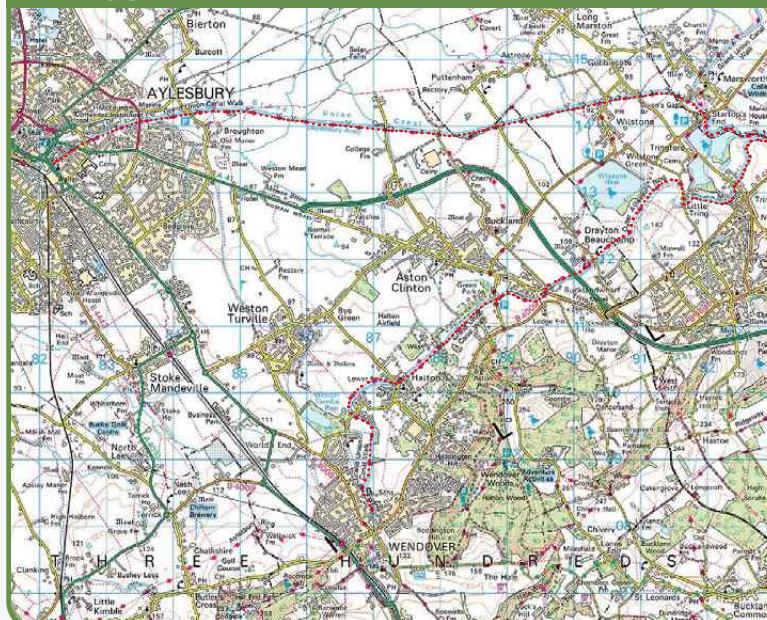
From there it's just a short walk to the town centre for pubs, restaurants, and a half-hourly train back to Aylesbury. **CB**

EAT AND DRINK

- Farmers' Bar at the King's Head, Market Square, Aylesbury HP20 2RW. 01296 718812
- Half Moon, Tring Road, Wiltstone HP23 4PD. 01442 826410
- Red Lion, Vicarage Road, Marsworth HP23 4LU. 01296 668366
- Bluebells Tearooms, Startops End, Marsworth HP23 4LJ. 01442 891708
- Bell Inn, London Road, Aston Clinton HP22 5HP. 01296 632777
- George & Dragon, Aylesbury Road, Wendover HP22 6JQ. 01296 586152

THE ROUTE

7 miles or 14 miles



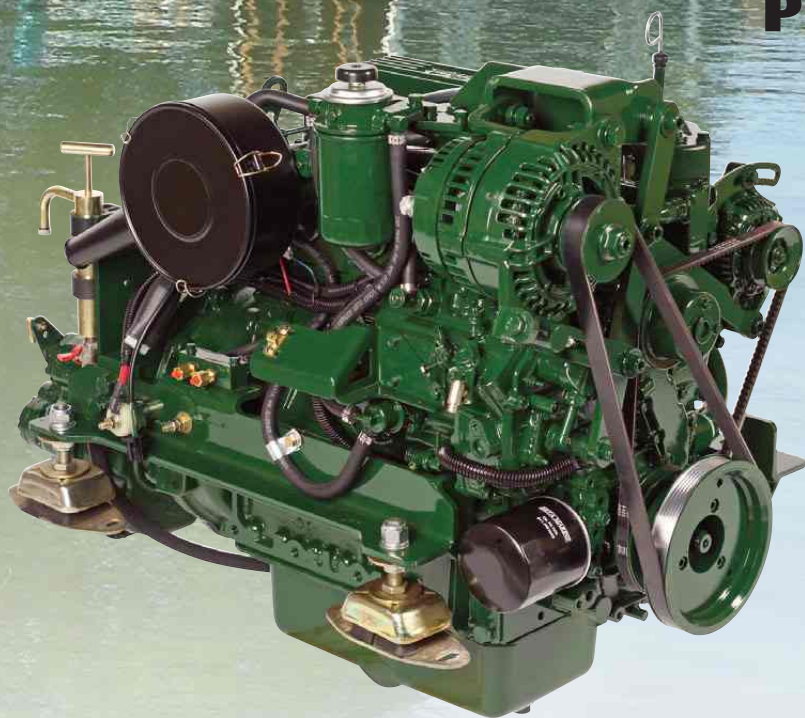
We recommend the Ordnance Survey's Landranger map 165 Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard to accompany this walk.

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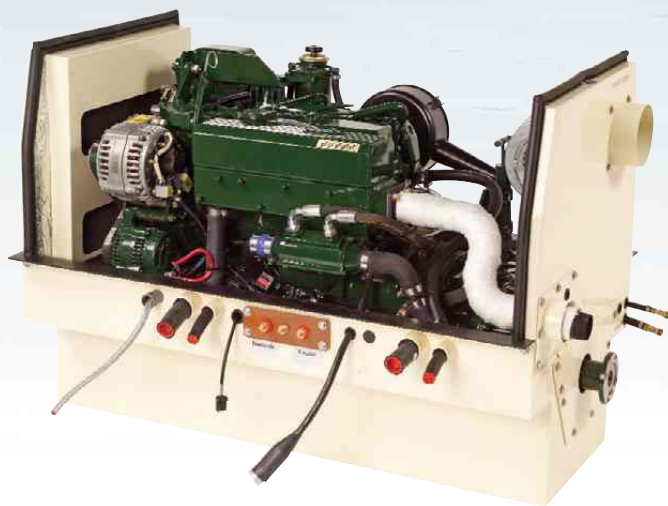
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Back Cabin

■ ASK THE EXPERTS ■ COOKING ■ BUYING ■ DIARY ■ 20 QUESTIONS



Used cruisers

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Our pick of GRP river
cruisers, from starter
boats to those that take
all the family boating

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SKIN TANKS

If you've ever had over-heating
problems, here are some facts
you might find useful



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EXPERTS

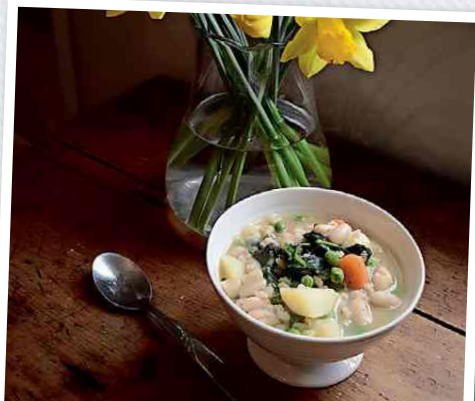
Revving it up; 240v tools and
corrosion; why can't I steer?;
a generator for a liveaboard



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COOKING AFLOAT

Vicky makes a hearty broth to
help the Captain, who's feeling
very under the weather



Keeping your engine's cool



We often get queries about skin tank and cooling here at *CB*, usually if there's an over-heating problem, so here are some facts you might like to know

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **NICK WALL**

Most narrowboats on English canals have some form of keel cooling, as do some boats that use estuaries and ports where fine silt and mud can block more normal seagoing heat-exchanger cooling systems.

'Keel coolers' or 'skin tanks' are usually just a double skin of steel boxed onto the side of the hull. That might sound simple, but the actual design is very important due to the amount of heat that needs to be dissipated.

Generally, a typical modern diesel engine is roughly 30 percent efficient which means that fuel, when combusted in the engine, only uses 30 percent of the

heat for power and the rest is not utilised; a second 30 percent goes through the exhaust, 30 percent goes into the coolant and the final ten percent is radiated from the engine itself.

When put into context, a typical 50 or 60ft narrowboat fitted with, say, a Beta 43 engine produces 43hp/32kW at full load and speed of 2,800rpm.

At the same time, this engine also produces 32kW of heat into the cooling system. This heat flows to the keel cooling (skin) tank and is transferred through the steel hull and the 'insulated' thick painted surface, into the canal or river. To lose such a large amount of heat through what is a thick painted surface

means it requires a large area. Generally, though, most boats cruise the canals and rivers at around about 1,400rpm, creating correspondingly less heat that needs to be lost.

The most important factors to consider when designing a keel cooling tank for a canal boat are:

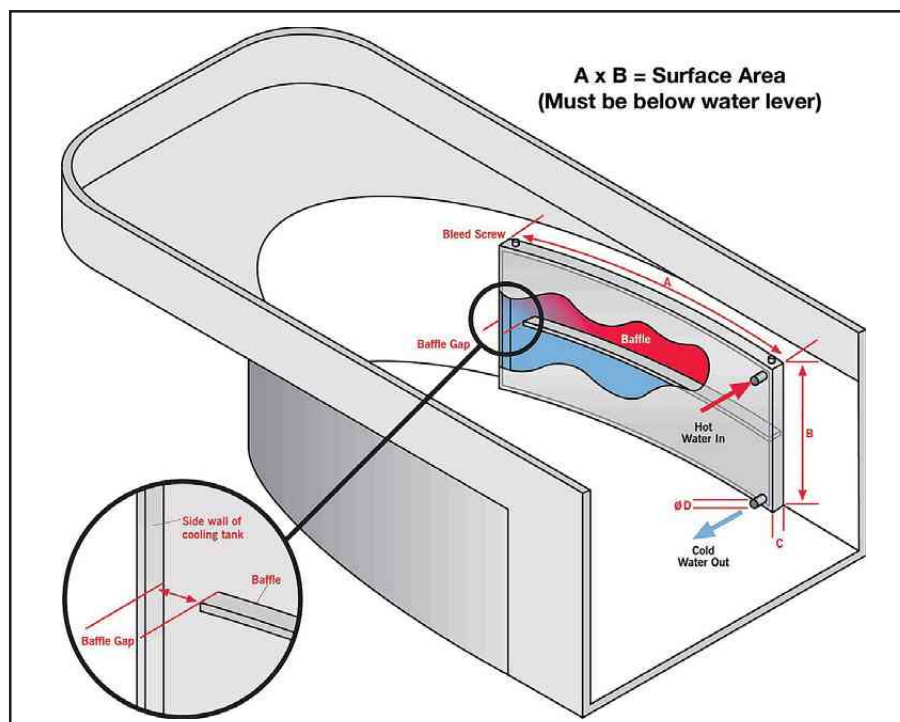
- The surface area of the tank in contact with the cold water outside the boat.
- The ability of the tank design to ensure that all the water passing through it is forced to make contact with the cold surface and cannot take a 'short cut' – a baffle is normally needed.
- The total volume of the system and the effect on expansion.

Based on calculations and experience, the best keel cooling tank for a canal boat should be vertical and built into the swim. For engines up to 100hp, the tank should be slim preferably 30-40mm, with the inlet at the top one end, and the outlet at the same end but at the bottom, making sure that there is a bleed screw at the highest point.

The tank should have a baffle dividing it into two, forcing the water to flow around in a U shape. This baffle should be continuously welded to the outer plating of the hull to give good thermal conductivity and as tight a fit as possible to the inner side of the tank. A simple baffle is preferable to keep the restriction placed upon the engine circulating pump



And that's where the skin tank gets its cooling



down to a minimum, allowing maximum flow of water across the cooling surface.

VERTICAL TANKS

Vertical tanks are preferable because they maintain the maximum amount of contact with the outer surface. Hull base tanks are less efficient due to the fact that the hot water remains at the top of the tank away from the cold base/outer hull.

They can, however, be made more efficient if they are kept to a minimum depth of 30-40mm utilising the same baffle system as the vertical tank. Welding 'fins' to the base before manufacture of this type of tank can be even more efficient.

CALCULATIONS

The surface area of the outer skin which forms one side of the tank should be sized as follows:

Steel – this rule is based on a steel hull:

Engine bhp $\div 4$ = area in square feet

'The larger the system the larger the expansion; the objective must be to keep the volume of the total system as low as possible'

Engine kW $\div 32$ = area square metres

Aluminium – for aluminium boats you can use the following rule because it has a higher thermal conductivity, the cooler size may be smaller:

Engine bhp $\div 5$ = area in square feet

Engine kW $\div 40$ = area square metres.

This surface area is a minimum for an engine developing its maximum continuous power at full engine rpm.

In practice, much smaller areas have been used without overheating due to a number of factors that affect the engine – the power used by most boaters when cruising on the canal is considerably less than maximum and many canal boat engines are over-propped and incapable of reaching their maximum rpm/power, even on a river.

HYDRAULIC DRIVE

A total hydraulic drive system has the big advantage of allowing installation of the engine/hydraulic pump anywhere in the boat, however, a totally hydraulic drive is a lot less efficient than a mechanical system so it's recommended to increase the 'cooling' surface area of the skin tank by about 30 percent.

EXPANSION

Slim tanks are favoured because they give much better mixing as described above but just as important, less

expansion. When water heats up its density drops thus increasing its volume, a typical water antifreeze mix of 50 percent at 10C has a density of 1043 kg/m³, this falls to 1005 kg/m³ at 80C (a typical engine running temperature).

This is approximately four percent difference in volume, and so for a ten-gallon system, the expansion is around three pints which means that there must be provision for expansion of three pints. If there isn't, the water will be lost through the overflow and have to be replaced each time the engine cools down.

So the larger the cooling system, the larger the expansion; the objective must be to keep the volume of the total system as low as possible using a slimline tank.

GEN SETS

It's advisable to have twin tanks when cooling a generating set as the duty of a set is generally when the boat is moored, which can be against the bank thus stopping any cooling water from getting to the outside surface.

Generating sets can be considered by using the formula

Power output (kW) $\div 1.75$ = area ft²

Thanks to Beta Marine for providing their help in producing this article.

CB



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TONY BROOKS
Technical Consultant

'Dark cloudy fuel or a jelly-like substance indicates diesel bug, so it's time to look at an additive'

WITHIN A WEEK or two I will be trying to remove from my fuel tank all traces of water that has got in and made the environment more conducive to diesel bug growth.

I use a Pella oil extractor to 'vacuum' the bottom of my tank with special attention to the lowest corners, until I see clear bright fuel being sucked out. You can also use a siphon or even a wet & dry vacuum cleaner suitably modified to accept a small pipe.

If your tank has a drain plug, check the boat's trim because, in many cases, the water will be below the drain at the back of the tank.

Bright clear pink fuel is fine; cloudy pink indicates possible water contamination; dark cloudy fuel or any jelly-like substance indicates diesel bug so it is time to look at a bug killer additive. I added a fuel conditioner at my last fill in the autumn which should help precipitate any water and also kill any bug.

Tony



Ask online...

Ask your questions and get the answers online at *Canal Boat's* website – what's more, you can read other people's questions and answers by simply clicking on to canalboat.co.uk

Why do I get no revs or flat out?

Q The injector pump on my 1999 BMC 1.8 engine was serviced because it leaked on a couple of high pressure banjos. I also changed the spill rail because the original had sheared.

The pump specialists didn't mention anything untoward other than I needed two new glowplugs; the new ones were as fitted to a Sherpa van. After fitting them, the engine was very difficult to start and, a short while after starting, it began to race at around 3,000rpm. The pump people advised unscrewing the anti-stall, but this made only a marginal difference.

I have since checked the fuel lift pump for leaks, the oil filler cap and breather pipe for signs of heavy smoke, and bled the pump again to be sure. The pump specialists say they can only assume the engine is running on a mist of sump oil or air intake oil; I fitted another pump and this proved to be no better. Any thoughts?

WAYNE PRICE, via email

A TONY REPLIES... I am sure the new glowplugs are fine, but check the voltage at the plugs when heating. Also check you have turned the fuel tap back on fully because fuel starvation will make engines with these pumps rev up.

The injector pump (marked 2 in the picture)

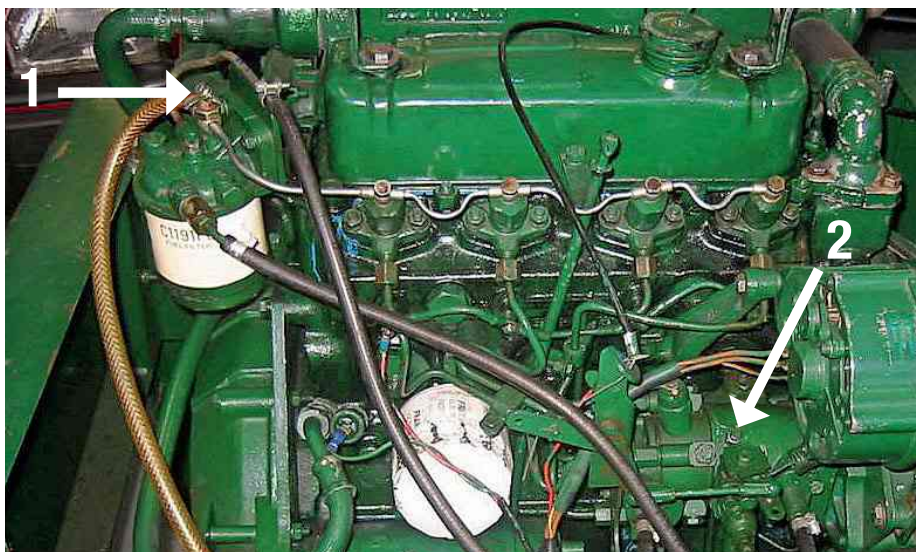
uses an hydraulic governor that can get upset or jam because of water in the fuel, air leaks, or lack of fuel pressure. I would also suggest oil atomisation – usually from overfilling – on a 1.8 that is easily solved by disconnecting the breather hose from the air filter. Check for smells of a gas leak, petrol or thinners fumes, these can get sucked in with the air and give such symptoms.

Loosen the banjo bolt on the top of the filter (marked 1 in the picture) and run the engine with a fuel leak there. If it fails to race, you have found the problem area. Remove the banjo bolt and ensure the 0.5mm side drilling is not blocked.

Are you sure you replaced the two fuel pipes running to/from the injector pump in their correct positions? Getting these the wrong way around might cause your symptoms. The one that has its filter end connected to the non-return valve screwed into the filter body should be connected to the front (timing cover end) of the pump.

Double check for air leaks on the whole supply line and under the lift pump cap for dirt etc. There may be a gauze strainer inside the tank, so try blowing back into the tank.

Finally, a long shot: a BMC 1.5 had the same issue and a substitute lift pump solved it, but it came back when the original pump was re-fitted. However, that lift pump worked on another engine. No one can explain that one...



Will 240v tools corrode my hull?



Q I am fitting out a steel-hulled boat using an extension lead from a shore power base for 240-volt hand lamps and power tools. Will this cause hull corrosion as the boat is in the water at the harbour? It has 24 large anodes.

WILLIAM CUMMING, via email

A TONY REPLIES... Does 'harbour' imply salt water? This has more dangers because of its lower electrical resistance. Twenty-four anodes sounds like a substantial

seagoing boat. If you are using mains extension leads to power your tools directly with no boat wiring, you need to be sure an RCD is fitted.

You should also use 110-volt (building site standard) lamps and tools via a proper site transformer to reduce any danger from wires being damaged on steelwork or water/damp getting in.

As long as the insulation is not compromised there should be no danger to your hull, because no circuit can exist between the hull, water, land and the electricity company's earth

protection. But if you are using permanent shoreline mains wiring in the boat, safety requires at least one RCD. For that to operate, you will need a single mains earth bond to the hull.

This requires professional advice and ideally fitting by a qualified person who can discuss whether an isolation transformer (pictured, right) or a galvanic isolator (left) would best suit you. Using neither could result in hull corrosion.

Remember, mains electricity can kill so you should take professional advice.

Getting a low flow? Check for any pipe kinks

Q How can I improve the very slow hot water flow on my Elysian 27? Install a higher pressured pump? De-scale the (original) calorifier?

LEE FRICKER, via email

A TONY REPLIES... Typical calorifier scale would not affect the hot flow rate because it would be on the outside of the heating coil, but would make it slow to heat.

It is probably best not to fit a higher pressure pump unless you can establish the opening pressure of the Pressure Relief Valve (PRV). Your water pump should be set to shut down at least 0.5 bar lower than the PRV.

If there is a non-return valve close to the calorifier cold water inlet, check this is not rusted or scaled up and the plunger/flap moves freely. Check no elbows, bends or T-fittings are blocked with scale or rust, and any hoses or plastic pipes aren't kinked or

squashed. Make sure no hidden valves are partially closed.

If you've checked all these then, although this is a small boat, my guess is that the total pipe run for the hot water is at least twice as long as the cold, causing more friction, which translates to a lower flow. Consider increasing pipe size: I would want to see at least 15mm internal diameter; possibly 22mm for pump to calorifier.



Why can't I steer?

Q I have just bought a 25ft GRP riverboat with an hydraulic outdrive. When I take it out on the canal the steering is all over the place. Do you have any ideas what could be wrong?

12FLOPS31, via the CB website

A TONY REPLIES... I'm not sure whether you mean an hydraulic power lift to take the leg out of the water, hydraulic steering, or hydraulic transmission – but here are some things to consider...

Unless the leg has a rudder added, the boat will not steer when in neutral and will be difficult to keep straight at low speeds. You can buy or make an add-on rudder.

Some small boats had bolt-on wooden keels: check that it's still there.

If something were partially seized up it would make the steering stiff, giving these symptoms.

Hydraulic steering systems need to be kept topped up (the filler is often behind the board the steering wheel assembly is fixed to) and if oil has been lost, the system may need bleeding. That would cause steering problems.

The boat might be incorrectly trimmed – for example after the engine is changed for a different one.

Finally, if you are used to a well set-up tiller-steered boat, switching to a wheel and leg drive will take some getting used to.

Shaft slip

Q Each time the marina staff move my boat to their maintenance berth, the shaft comes out of its coupling in reverse. I'm relatively new to boating and it hasn't been a problem when out cruising. What causes it, and what can be done to secure it? Is it likely to be damaged?

CHRISFEAST, via the *CB* website

A **TONY REPLIES...** Possibly the yard hands use more revs than you do (perhaps to use 'propeller walk' to help position the boat). From your photo it's a simple

clamp-on type secured with four bolts. If the yard loosened the bolts, replaced the shaft and tightened them correctly after the first time, then the shaft, coupling or both might be worn. The shaft and coupling bore size need measuring.

You have no flexible coupling so if the engine is flexibly mounted it will 'work' the coupling on the shaft unless you are using a packless stern gland (which you do) and Cutless rubber shaft bearings (which I expect you have). With this set-up it is vital that the coupling and engine are within 0.05mm in both axial and angular alignment. Old flexible engine mounts might have collapsed and put the engine out of alignment.

When you undo the half-coupling and push it back the shaft is only supported by rubber so will



not only drop but will also have a fair amount of radial movement.

Before aligning such shafts I always rig up wood and some nails to hold the shaft in the absolute centre of the play while I move the engine to get that 0.05mm of alignment.

Not a drip

Q I drained my water system for winter by opening the taps and calorifier drain valve and letting it run dry. I've now refilled the tank and turned on the (self-priming) pump: it runs but there's no water: any ideas?

DARREN WARD, via email

A **TONY REPLIES...** Did you turn the main water cock off and forget to turn it back on? Is there a non-return valve in the pipe between the tank and pump – if so, with the pump running, tap it with a block of wood just in case it has stuck. Likewise, there might be a blocked strainer on the pump inlet.

If it is a Jabsco flexible impeller Water Puppy system, you should have drained the impeller housing. If not it might have frozen and bowed the cover. Take the cover off and inspect it, the gasket

and the impeller. Change for new as required and squirt some water into the pump before you put the cover on. If it's a piston pump, the valves might be jammed by muck. I don't advise cleaning these because they tend to leak on re-assembly.

Push a wooden plug into the tank breather/overflow, pack around the filling hose with rag, turn the pump on and then turn the filling

water on, holding the hose and packing so you pressurise the tank. With luck this will get water into the pump and it will work. Alternatively, turn all the taps off bar one, turn the pump on and suck very hard on the open tap. It will have similar results – mind the taste of three-month-old water!

Finally, if the motor is running but the pump is not pumping the pump drive may have broken.



The gauge hasn't got a clue...

Q The temperature gauge on the deluxe power panel connected to my Lister LPWS4 has started flapping about all over the place. I have tried shorting the sender, but the gauge did not go to high. Any idea of the cause?

MICKEAMES, via the *CB* website

A **TONY REPLIES...** These are normally bi-coil gauges and if the coil that is earthed (negative) gets an open circuit then the gauge will flick to full scale deflection. But while an intermittent earth fault may explain the flapping about, it does not explain why earthing the wire at the sender does not give full-scale

deflection at least some of the time. This suggests the problem may be in the positive side or, more likely, on the cable between gauge and sender. A multi-plug connector on the main engine wiring harness may have developed a loose or dirty connection.

If the wiring has no faults, you are left with a faulty gauge – save for one thing: many more modern Listers use a relay that provides a negative path when starting, rather than simply having an earth return. If this plays up (especially intermittently, as with a loose or dirty connection) it might give odd symptoms. However, I would expect this to cause starting problems before gauge problems.

So basically, check all the wiring and connections, and if all is well, change the gauge.

WEB Q&As



FIRST TIME NERVES

Q I'm hiring a boat and being new to it all I'm worried that my lack of knowledge will make me slow, especially through locks, and a bit of a traffic jam, what can I do?

FORESTALL, via email

A NICK REPLIES... You could do a day or weekend course first, or possibly find someone to take you out for the day. If you are unable to do either, don't worry it's easy to learn and the hire company will give you some training before you leave. And don't worry about being 'slow', the whole point of boating is to take it slowly and enjoy yourself.

CAN YOU HIRE SOLO?

Q I am an Australian who in 2013 went to the UK with my wife and hired a narrowboat for two weeks. I would like to come again, but on my own. Is there a company that offers solo boat hire?

SMOOTHAS, via the *CB* website

A NICK REPLIES... Yes, some companies do hire to solo boaters, but you will have to prove you have the experience to handle a boat on your own for a week or longer. As you have hired before, I'd suggest going back to that company as they know you, if you wish to go elsewhere, be prepared demonstrate your skills.

Ask online...

Ask your questions and get the answers online at *Canal Boat's* website – what's more, you can read other people's

questions and answers by simply clicking on to canalboat.co.uk



What type of generator for a liveaboard?

Q I'm looking to fit a 4kW professionally installed cocooned type diesel generator in my liveaboard boat. What type would fit on the top of a cruiser stern swim? I am also going to install solar panels. What battery charger, battery management systems etc would I need to get the most out of the solar panels and batteries?

TCURTIS165, via the *CB* website

A TONY REPLIES... We don't usually give advice on particular makes, but it would need to be small enough to fit on the swim and under the deck boards. If your installer offers you a choice, look at the cost of spare parts.

The solar panels will require their own charge controller and an MPPT type is the most efficient at maximising charge.

A 4kW generator will drive almost any sized battery charger, but the ideal type would be a marine multi-stage charger designed so that it cannot overcharge the batteries, can be left running for long periods and is moisture-resistant.

If shoreline-powered, a modest 10 to 20 amps would be fine because it could be left on 24/7; the generator complicates things because it is unlikely to be running for many hours at a time. The optimum size depends on the battery bank

size and electrical demand, but something around 30 to 40 amps should be fine. Again your installer should be able to advise.

Do you have an inverter to provide 240v AC away from a shoreline when the generator is not running? If not, you can buy combi-units (pictured, left) that combine charger and inverter – and possibly provision for solar charging control too. On the downside, if one part of such units fails you might lose all functions.

Do a power audit and charging calculations to ensure your battery bank is large enough and can be recharged within the time limits (8am to 8pm) CRT allows for engine running (including generators) while stationary.

Ideally, you will have a means of monitoring the battery charge: the simplest is a Smartgauge. Other charge meters can drift out of true over time, unless you very regularly get the batteries to very nearly fully charged, and can tell you the batteries are far better charged than they really are. Such meters need setting up properly and regularly re-synchronising with the battery banks' ever-decreasing capacity. As they display amps and volts, an experienced person can estimate the battery charge.

There are entrenched views about the different types of meter but, for an inexperienced boater, I feel the Smartgauge probably has the edge.



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A broth to help fight the flu

With the Captain laid low, Vicky raids the larder for veg and pearl barley for make a nourishing soup

The Captain is laid up. He's got the man flu. The only company he wants at his bedside table are *Night Nurse* and a thriller by Lee Child. He's groaning, shivering cold and his muscles ache. Yes, it's man flu all right.

Time for me to abandon his end of the ship and head for the back cabin, light the fire, make up the cosy and inviting little bed and keep out of his way. The very last thing I

want is to be sneezed and coughed over throughout the night. He's in isolation, in bed under the tug deck where he will be confined until signed off and declared fit to return to the helm.

But there is no escaping the fact that I will have to administer to his needs with sustenance and cold drinks plus his whisky night cap, and re-trace his footsteps at the end of the day with my antibiotic spray.

We certainly won't be moving off in the foreseeable future, unless I get desperate and go single handed, so we will batten down the hatches and stay put moored next to the towpath. That makes one crew member a very happy sea-dog. No engine to bark at and a towpath a short step away. Brian is the happiest dog on the cut.

The weather is showing no sign of improvement and thankfully the larder is well stocked ready for such an occasion as this. We are all quite content to stay put for a few days.

It's time to raid the larder and prepare some nourishing

soup for the poor invalid. This broth will work well with any combination of ingredients that you may have on board and I have even used grated sprouts instead of spinach or cabbage. Just always make sure you have some pearl barley tucked in the depths of the store cupboard.

This is a filling bowl of soup and, depending on your appetite, will last a couple of days. It's consistency is thick and, along with all the vitamins from the vegetables, the pulses tick the box for your daily requirements of protein. It's cheap, quick, delicious and easy to make. A perfect meal for my poorly patient. CB

'This is a filling soup and, depending on your appetite, will last a couple of days. It's cheap, quick and delicious'



NOURISHING SOUP

Ingredients

- 1 litre of vegetable stock
- Half a cup of pearl barley
- Onion, finely sliced
- A few green vegetables eg spinach, cabbage leaves etc
- 1 carrot and parsnip, cubed
- Diced medium potato
- Cup of frozen peas
- 400g tin of white beans, cannellini

Method

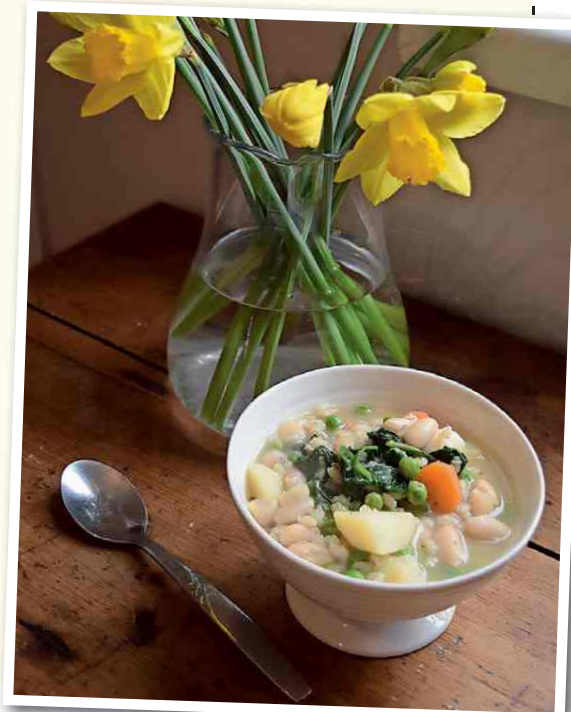
You will need about a litre of vegetable stock either made from a stock cube or, better still, from the saved liquids that previous vegetables have been cooked in. Pour the stock into a large saucepan and bring it to the boil.

Prepare the root vegetables by peeling and dicing into small cubes so they cook quickly. Once the stock is boiling, add the pearl barley, carrot and parsnip, finely sliced onion and the potato. Cook for about 20 minutes until everything is tender and then open the can of cannellini beans and drain them through a wire sieve, rinsing them well. Add these to the stock. Return the pan to the heat and simmer.

Wash the green vegetables, remove any stringy stems from kale or cabbage and shred the vegetables into matchstick-sized slivers and then add to the simmering broth along with a cupful of frozen peas and cook until everything is tender.

Pour the broth into pre-warmed bowls and drizzle over about a teaspoonful of

extra virgin olive oil, add a blob of creme fraise if you have it. Serve with toast, crunchy bread and butter and chunks of cheese.





GRP river cruisers

Don't fancy a steel narrowboat? Then take a look at our pick of GRPs on sale at present...

1976 31ft *ROCKING ROBINS*

£16,500

This is a well presented Project 31 GRP river cruiser, which is fitted with twin Perkins 4.108 inboard diesels.

It has been well maintained; the port engine was re-built in 2012 and both Z drives were re-built in 2011. It has a beam of 9ft 6in.

There are five berths – one V-shaped double berth at the front, Pullman seats behind which convert to another two

berths, while a padded seat at the rear of the cockpit makes the fifth.

It has hot and cold water, a fridge, a full-size cooker, a sea toilet plus a Porta Potti, a shower and washbasin, and Eberspächer cabin heating.

It had a new canopy in 2012, new upholstery in 2015 and was last anti-fouled in April 2013.

Contact:

0115 9077 412
bwml.co.uk

Verdict:

Get rocking with this well-maintained five-berth river cruiser



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GRP RIVER CRUISERS

1979 22FT *AMAPOLA*

£3,800



Want to get a start in boating? Well, here's a Viking 22 aft cockpit GRP cruiser with an Evinrude 9.9hp outboard engine.

It sleeps up to four with one double berth and two singles. The galley is equipped with a two-burner stove with oven and grill, and a sink; there's a cassette wc in the heads area.

It has a cockpit cover and two years left on the British Safety Certificate and has a beam of 7ft 6in.

Although on the basic side with no shower, this boat would make an ideal introduction to boating at a low-cost outlay.

Contact:

01603 717989
norfolk.boatshed.com

Verdict:

A good basic boat to get you out on the water at a low price

1968 26FT 10IN *HAZY DAZE*

£8,950



This Elysian 27 has been very well maintained by her current owners. It was last out of the water in March 2015 for a hull inspection, pressure wash and anti-foul treatment.

It can sleep four in two double berths. The galley features a two-burner stove, grill and oven, plus a fridge and a sink and drainer.

There's a TV and DVD, a shower in a curtained cubicle, and the heads area is equipped with a manual wc. Stern and bow rails have been installed for added safety.

Hazy Daze has a BMC 37hp diesel engine, a beam of 9ft 7in, and, with a four-year British Safety Certificate, is very much ready to enjoy.

Contact:

01603 717989
norfolk.boatshed.com

Verdict:

Very well kept and equipped – and all ready to take straight out

1975 37FT *SUNDANCER ON SEVERN*

£42,750



This is a Broom Ocean, fitted with twin Perkins 5.7lt inboard engines, and with seven berths it would make an ideal liveaboard or family cruiser.

In the port-side galley there is a full-size cooker, microwave, extractor fan, a deep freeze/chiller, and a separate fridge. The salon has a C-shaped dinette. To starboard is the lower steering position. At the rear of the saloon, there's a navigation station with a chart table and VHF radio. There are fore and aft cabins, both with wardrobes and en suite showers and wcs.

Upstairs there's an upper steering position with full instruments and steering wheel. Outside at the stern there are two teak bathing platforms. It has a beam of 12ft and has regularly been taken through the Beeston Canal.

Contact:

0115 9077 412
bwml.co.uk

Verdict:

Lots of berths and lots of extras in this seven-berth river cruiser

2013 28FT *LAZEE DAZE*

£69,500



This Viking Seamaster 28 offers a rare opportunity to purchase a model with an inboard Vetus 65hp shaft drive diesel, that's been run for approximately 250 hours.

It is fitted with a bow thruster, battery charger with inverter, hot air cabin heating and teak flooring to the cockpit.

Lazee Daze features accommodation for six in three sleeping areas. There's a spacious galley set to port, offset from the main corridor, a large toilet and shower room to starboard and an excellent sized cockpit with seating for six in comfort and a double helm seat to port. It has a beam of around 10ft and, with folding screens, it will navigate widebeam canals.

Contact:

01189 477770
tingdeneboatsales.net

Verdict:

Laze your days away in this spacious GRP which sleeps six

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Hull Mercia Marine/ Fit Out Lime Farm
Beta 38 Diesel Engine
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£47,950



WANDERING STAR

57ft (17.38m) Traditional Style Narrowboat 2004
Hull: Mike Christian/ Fit Out Andrew Thacker 200
Beta 38 Diesel Engine 35HP
Four Berths
£47,950



VOYAGER

56ft (17.07m) Trad Stern Narrowboat 1997
Hull: G&J Reeves / Fit - Out Aynho
Beta Diesel Engine 43 HP
Six Berths
£41,950



RAMBLERS

40ft (12.20m) Trad Style Narrowboat 2005 Hull
Andy Craft / FO Owner/ professional
BMC 1.8 Diesel Engine
Two Berth
£29,950



EVOLUTION

44ft (13.41m) Trad Style Narrowboat 1990
Builder Not Known/Recent Owner Refit
Lister 2cyl Diesel Engine
3 Berth
£39,950



BEDDINGTON BELLE

35ft (10.67m) River Cruiser - Style Steel Boat 1992
Built by Springer Engineering
Lister Petter LPW53 Diesel Engine
Four Berths
£18,950



PATRICIA MARY

35ft (10.67m) All Steel Cruiser Style NB 1997
Hull R&D / F/O Curzon Boat Builders
Nanni 3 cylinder Diesel Engine
Fixed Double
£22,950



SARDINE

30ft (9.15m) All Steel Trad Style Narrowboat
1984 Built By Les Allen
Lister SW2 Diesel Engine c1984
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diesel engine. 2 berth - fixed double
in own cabin. Solid fuel stove and
Webasto. Thetford cassette toilet.
BSC to 06/2018. Ref: The Duchess.
Lying Gran Union Canal, Uxbridge
..... **£44,500**



**BLACK PRINCE 17m (55ft)
SEMI TRADITIONAL STERN
NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1989. Fitted by Black Prince.
Kubota 3cyl diesel engine. 4 berth
- fixed double in own cabin plus
two singles in own cabin. Solid fuel stove. Porta potti & pump out toilet. BSC to 11/2017. Ref: Elisa. Lying High Line Yachting, Iver..... **£25,000**



**FERNIE FABRICATIONS
17m (57ft) CRUISER STERN
NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1978. Fitted by Previous
owners. Beta Marine 38hp diesel
engine. 3 berth - fixed double in own
cabin plus large single at the bow. Hardy Solid fuel stove. Jabco Pump out toilet.
BSC to 01/2020. Ref: Bellweather. High Line Yachting, Iver..... **£28,000**



**COLECRAFT 18m (60ft) CRUISER
STERN NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1999. Fitted by High Line
Yachting. BMC 1.8 diesel engine. 2
berth - fixed double in own cabin.
Range with back boiler. Thetford
cassette 365 toilet. BSC to 08/2019. Ref: Pangloss Lying High Line Yachting, Iver.
Ref: Pangloss. Lying High Line Yachting, Iver..... **£29,500**

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**T T MARINE 21m (70ft)
TRADITIONAL STERN
NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1987. Fitted by T T Marine.
Thornycroft 4cyl diesel engine. 4
berth - fixed double in own cabin plus
convertible in dinette. Solid fuel stove
and Mikuni boiler. Porta Potti toilet. BSC to 10/2017. Ref: Halcyon. Lying High
Line Yachting, Iver..... **£32,000**



**STEELCRAFT 15m (50ft)
CRUISER STERN NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1994. Fitted by G.H Bryant.
BMC 4cyl diesel engine. 4 berth
- fixed double in own cabin and
convertible in saloon. Alde gas boiler.
Pump out toilet. BSC to 5/2016.
Ref: Meander.
Lying High Line Yachting..... **£35,000**



**HARLAND & WOLFF 18m (60ft)
TRADITIONAL STERN NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1935 as a butty. Converted to
a motor and internally fitted by M E
Braine in the mid 70's. Iron / steel hull
and timber superstructure. Armstrong
Siddleley 3cyl 30hp diesel engine. 5 berth - fixed double in own cabin, cross double
in Boatmans cabin, and further single in saloon. Eberspacher diesel heating and solid
fuel stove with back boiler. Porta Potti chemical toilet. BSC to 10/2016. Ref: Satellite.
Lying High Line Yachting, Iver..... **£37,500**



**LES ALLEN & SONS 21m (70ft)
TRADITIONAL STERN NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1973. Fitted by Paul King &
Previous owners. Lister HR2 29.5hp
diesel engine. 2 berth - fixed double in
own cabin. Kabula old English boiler.
Porta Potti toilet but all connections and tank are there for pump out toilet. BSC to
09/2017. Ref: Nansuch. Lying High Line Yachting, Iver..... **£36,000**



**DRAGON BOATS 17m
(55ft) TRADITIONAL STERN
NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1999. Fitted by Previous
owner. Barus Shanks 38hp diesel
engine. 2 berth - fixed double in
own cabin. Solid fuel stove and
Eberspacher (radiators). Thetford electric flush cassette toilet.
BSC to 02/2019. Ref: Simba. Lying High Line Yachting, Iver..... **£39,750**



**HERITAGE BOATS 17m
(57ft) TRADITIONAL STERN
NARROWBOAT**
Built in 1994. Fitted by Heritage Boats.
3HD Perkins 46hp diesel engine. 6
berth - fixed double in own cabin,
cross double in Boatman's cabin plus
convertible sofa in saloon. Alde gas
boiler. Porta Potti cassette toilet. BSC to
04/2017. Ref: His Lordship Corbiere.
Lying High Line Yachting, Northolt..... **£39,950**



**LIVERPOOL BOATS 18m (60ft)
CRUISER STERN WIDEBEAM**
Built in 2007. Fitted by Liverpool
boats. Isuzu 55hp diesel engine. 4
berth - fixed double in own cabin and
convertible sofa. Solid fuel stove and
Webasto. Pump out and Porta Potti
toilet. BSC to 06/2016. Ref: Maltose Falcon.
Lying High Line Yachting, Northolt..... **£69,000**



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WINDERMERE Price: £65,000
Style: Semi-traditional stern narrowboat 58ft
Description: A 2009 Aqua House 6 berth
Location: Alvechurch Marina Tel: 0121 445 1133



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Style: Semi traditional stern narrowboat 58ft
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Style: Traditional stern narrowboat 62ft
Description: A 1997 Les Allen 4 berth
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HAPPY HEDGEHOG Price: £48,000
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Description: 2001 Johnathan Wilson 2/4 berth
Location: Anderton Marina Tel: 01606 79642



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RUFFIAN RAMBLER Price: £42,900
Style: Semi-traditional narrowboat 58ft
Description: A 2004 RLL Boats 4 berth
Location: Hilperton Marina Tel: 01225 765243



ENDEAVOUR Price: £34,000
Style: Cruiser stern narrowboat 52ft
Description: 2001 G T Boat Builders 6/7 berth
Location: Gayton Marina Tel: 01604 858685



MOTHER IDA Price: £54,950
Style: Traditional stern narrowboat 70ft
Description: A 1982 B&A Deavall 6 berth
Location: Alvechurch Marina Tel: 0121 445 1133



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The real jewel in the crown, however, is the primary location of our brokerage service at Mercia Marina. It's a great place to visit - almost a day out in itself - and a fantastic showcase for the boats. As a buyer, you can view the boats at your leisure with absolutely no pressure, but knowing that if you have any questions there's always a friendly expert on hand who wants to help you get to know the boats inside out.

Nobody is more devoted to the waterways than the New & Used Boat Co. It's in the DNA of our people and we believe in straight dealing with the buyers and sellers who share our passion. That's why we are one of the few inland waterway companies that have voluntarily joined the Boat Retailers and Brokers Association which commits us to a strict code of practice that gives you financial security.

But let's give the last word to our General Manager at Mercia Marina, Ian Parrott. "I love boats and it's great being able to share all the knowledge I've acquired over the years with our customers. I regard my job as matchmaker, bringing together the right buyer and the right boat. At the end of the day, here at the New & Used Boat Co we make it possible for everybody to be happy whether they're the vendor or the purchaser."



HEMLOCK - £26,950
MODEL Graham Parker **YEAR** 1987
LENGTH 40 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Trad **LYING AT** Leicestershire



SWEET JANE - £45,000
MODEL Measham **YEAR** 2004
LENGTH 70 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Trad **LYING AT** Droitwich Spa



DRAGONFLY - £28,950
MODEL Liverpool Boat **YEAR** 2007
LENGTH 48 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Cruiser **LYING AT** Hanbury



VIXEN - £79,950
MODEL Mel Davies **YEAR** 2006
LENGTH 70 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Trad **LYING AT** Mercia



SUN RAY - £29,950
MODEL Midland CC **YEAR** 2009
LENGTH 33 feet **BEAM** Narrow **STERN** Cruiser **LYING AT** Mercia



ARABELLA - £38,950
MODEL P Widdowson **YEAR** 2007
LENGTH 38 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Cruiser **LYING AT** Mercia



FASSIFERN - £48,950
MODEL Goldsborough **YEAR** 1999
LENGTH 69 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Cruiser **LYING AT** Mercia



LENA - £54,950
MODEL Orchard Marine **YEAR** 2007
LENGTH 57 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Cruiser **AT** Outlying Nr Hanbury



JOLLY MEANDERS - £52,950
MODEL Reeves **YEAR** 2006
LENGTH 57 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Trad **LYING AT** Mercia



ROEBUCK - £79,950
MODEL Reeves **YEAR** 2011
LENGTH 70 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Semi-Trad **LYING AT** Mercia



LONGPOD - £54,950
MODEL Piper **YEAR** 2008 **LENGTH** 57 feet **BEAM** Narrow **STERN** Cruiser **LYING AT** Droitwich Spa



CRAFTY NARROWBOAT - £59,950
YEAR 2004 **LENGTH** 70 feet **BEAM** Narrow **STERN** Trad **LYING AT** Outlying Derbyshire



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MODEL S Hodges **YEAR** 2005
LENGTH 65 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Trad **LYING AT** Mercia



OUR TIME - £64,950
MODEL Pinders **YEAR** 2012 **LENGTH** 62 feet **BEAM** Narrow **STERN** Semi-Trad **LYING AT** Droitwich Spa



FIREFLY - £74,950
MODEL Aqualine **YEAR** 2007 **LENGTH** 65 feet **BEAM** Narrow **STERN** Cruiser **LYING AT** Mercia



WALTZING MATILDA - £49,500
MODEL J D Boats **YEAR** 2000
LENGTH 58 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Cruiser **LYING AT** Mercia



TICHANME - £56,950
MODEL Tyler/Wilson **YEAR** 2008
LENGTH 62 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Semi-Trad **LYING AT** Mercia



TRAVELLING THRU - £59,950
MODEL Hexagon Boats **YEAR** 2007
LENGTH 60 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Semi-Trad **LYING AT** Mercia



MADURA - £74,950
MODEL Aqualine/MCC **YEAR** 2012
LENGTH 58 feet **BEAM** Narrow
STERN Cruiser **LYING AT** Mercia



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MODEL Orchard/Collingwood **YEAR** 2015
LENGTH 60x12ft **BEAM** Wide
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MODEL Notts Boat Co **YEAR** **NEW** 2015
LENGTH 12x65 ft **BEAM** Wide
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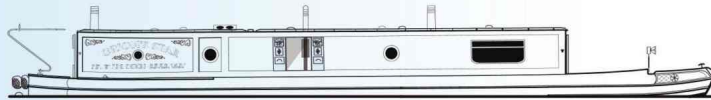
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SELECTION OF BOATS LOCAL TO CRICK

ARBUTUS: 62ft 0in DWR Narrowboats/Norton Canes Boatbuilders trad with Gardner 2LW diesel engine. Arbutus is a trad style narrowboat which attracts many admiring glances without being a slave to tradition. With a view to longevity of the steelwork, the hull and superstructure were grit blasted and 2-pack epoxy paints applied before launch. 4 berths: permanent double, double in Boatman's cabin; shower, Thetford cassette wc; solid fuel stove, gas central heating; gas cooking, 230V fridge, 230V freezer, washer; 3kW inverter. Boat built 2007.

Crick area - £79,800



ALICIA: 65ft 2in Des Wright (owner)/Liverpool Boats trad with Beta B43 diesel engine and bow thruster. Beautifully presented, designed by the owner, includes a large cupboard with washer & separate tumble dryer with calorifier in an airing cupboard. 4 berths: permanent double crossed; double on Pullman dinette; shower, pump-out wc; solid fuel stove, gas central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge, 12V freezer, washer, dryer; 3kW inverter. Built 2010.

Crick area - £69,000

UNION BELLE: 60ft 3in Kate Boats/Colecraft semi-trad with Beta B43 diesel engine. Quality joinery construction with attractive design and bold soft furnishings are particularly striking. The well designed interior layout features a saloon fore and aft. 3 berths: permanent double, single on aft cabin bench seat; shower, pump-out wc; solid fuel stove, compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 230V fridge, washer; 2.5kW inverter. Built 2003.

Crick area - £65,000

THISLDOME: 60ft 1in Barry Hawkins cruiser stern with Barrus Shire 40 diesel engine and bow thruster. Reverse layout cabin allows space for a walk-through full width wet room. 2 toilets. 6 berths: 2 permanent crossed singles, Pullman dinette double, double on L-shaped settee; shower, pump-out wc, separate wc; solid fuel stove, compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge; 1.6kW inverter. Built 2008.

Crick area - £64,000

ZION: 60ft 0in Midland Canal Centre/Stenson Boatbuilders semi-cruiser with Barrus Shanks 45 diesel engine. Where the cabin sides extend beyond the length of the cabin thus partially enclosing the normally open cruiser deck. Reverse layout. 6 berths: permanent double, 2 permanent singles; Pullman dinette double; shower, Thetford cassette wc; solid fuel stove, compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge; 3kW inverter. Built 2010.

Crick area - £61,000

K2: 58ft 1in Valley Cruises/G&J Reeves cruiser with Lister LPW4S diesel engine and bow thruster. Enjoyed for extended cruising from the offset, having explored the majority of the connected canal and river system. 3 berths: permanent double, permanent single; hip bath with shower, pump-out wc; solid fuel stove, compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 230V fridge; 2kW inverter. Built 1998.

Crick area - £49,000



WATER WITCH: 61ft 8in Midland Canal Centre trad. Russell Newbury DM2 diesel engine. Packed full of character. 4 berths: permanent double, double in Boatman's cabin (made either as one would expect, as a cross bed, or can be made lengthways); shower over bath, pump-out wc; solid fuel stove, solid fuel range in Boatman's cabin, gas central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge. Built 1991.

Crick area - £46,000

THE CARPET BAGGERS: 55ft 1in owners/Liverpool Boats trad with Lister Canalstar 36 diesel engine. Feature fireplace with diesel central heating stove supplying radiators. 2 berths: permanent double; shower, pump-out wc; diesel stove central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge, 230V freezer, microwave; 1.5kW inverter. Built 1995.

Crick area - £39,200

SELECTION OF OUTLYING BOATS TO VIEW

BARNESWOOD: 60ft 0in Kingsground Narrowboats/Bluewater Boats semi-trad with Beta Marine B43 hybrid diesel electric drive and bow thruster. Do you want to sneak up on kingfishers? Then this reverse layout boat for you. Propulsion is by an electric motor coupled by a drive belt to the prop shaft for near silent cruising - which, when locking, can even be controlled wirelessly! 4 berths: permanent double, double on sofa bed; shower, pump-out wc; gas free diesel fired central heating range for heating and cooking; 230V fridge, 230V freezer; 5kW inverter. Built 2011.

Oxford Canal, Oxon - £99,000

JAZZ: 69ft 11in Tony Francis trad with Gardner 3LW diesel engine and bow thruster. Built for a wealthy customer who spared no expense on the fit-out, this boat has pretty much everything that even the most discerning buyer could wish for. 2 single berths bridgeable to make double; shower, pump-out wc; diesel stove central heating, solid fuel range in Boatman's cabin; gas cooking, microwave, 12V fridge, 12V freezer, washer; 1.6kW inverter, 5.5kW diesel generator. Built 2001.

T & M Canal, Staffs - £68,000



KOTUKU: 57ft Cruiser stern narrowboat

KOTUKU: 57ft 0in Owner/Shropshire Boats cruiser with Isuzu 35 diesel engine. Since completing the fit-out, he has in fact used the boat very little so Kotuku is virtually pristine condition with very few engine hours. As a former employee of a very up-market car manufacturer, the owner knows a thing or two about attention to detail. 4 berths: permanent double, double across dinette seating; shower, Thetford cassette wc; compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge freezer; 2.7kW inverter. Built 2010.

Shrops Union, Shrops - £55,000



Thinking
of
selling?

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the team

TIMEGOESBY: 57ft 4in JM Clarke Narrowboats/Jonathan Wilson trad with Barrus Shire 2002 diesel engine. The internal fit-out is in ash featuring sweeping curves to worktops and much of the other custom built furniture, with flooring in a combination of ceramic tile and solid birch boarding. 4 berths: permanent double, double on futon; shower, cassette wc; diesel stove; gas cooking, 12V fridge, 12V freezer, washer; 2kW inverter, 3.5kW engine driven generator, solar panels. Built 2004.

Oxford Canal, Oxon - £53,000

VILANI: 56ft 0in Liverpool Boats semi-trad with Isuzu 35 diesel engine and bow thruster. Oak linings with custom designed oak units arranged in a layout that has been fine tuned over many years of production. Easy to clean laminate worktops and an ample 6ft 3in headroom. 4 berths: permanent double, double on saloon seating; shower, pump-out wc; solid fuel stove, compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge; 1.6kW inverter. Built 2006.

K & A Canal, Wilts - £48,500

RHINO: 58ft 7in First owner/Black Mills Boats trad with Boatman's cabin, powered by Coventry Godiva diesel engine and bow thruster. A traditional hull and forward 'clothed' section cabin (but actually over steel) with white painted internal fit-out and GAS FREE. 5 berths: permanent double, double in Boatman's cabin, single in fore cabin; shower, Thetford cassette wc; solid fuel stove fore and aft, compact diesel central heating; diesel cooking, microwave, 12V fridge, washer; 2kW inverter. Boat built 2003. Selling as owns another boat.

Lancaster Canal - £47,000

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AUGUSTA: 62ft 3in Stoke-on-Trent Boatbuilders trad with Russell Newbery DM2 diesel engine and bow thruster. Renowned for their consistent, high standard of production, and with a Russell Newbery DM2 engine with its mellow exhaust note. 6 berths: 2 permanent singles (make double), double on L-shape seating aft, 2 single chair beds; shower over bath, pump-out wc; solid fuel stove, compact diesel central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge; 1.8kW inverter. Built 1990.

G Union, Bucks - £46,000

CELANDINE: 56ft 1in Silsden Boats/South West Durham Steelcraft cruiser with Beta BV1505 diesel engine. Hardwearing and easy clean yet attractive with the painted panels to the cabin sides complementing the pine fit-out very well. Headlining in white melamine aides the feeling of airiness. 6 berths: 2 permanent singles (could make double), double on Pullman dinette, 2 single chair beds; shower, pump-out wc; gas central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge; 1.8kW inverter. Built 2002.

G Union, Northants - £45,000



LADY MADELEINE: 46ft 3in Snaygill Boats/Colecraft cruiser with Thornycroft 90 diesel engine. Capable of navigating the entire canal system and the sociable cruiser stern provides ample space for the steerer along with the rest of the crew. This reverse layout cabin can accommodate 4 berths: permanent double, double on saloon seating; wet room shower, pump-out wc; gas central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge. Boat built 1987.

K & A Canal, Berks - £29,500

SAILOR VEE: 32ft 2in South West Durham Steelcraft cruiser with Beta 35 diesel engine. The saying 'size isn't everything' could have been thought up with Sailor Vee in mind. At just over 32 feet from bow to stern, this remarkable little boat manages to pack in pretty much everything that is required for comfortable cruising on the inland waterways. 4 berths: double across bench seats, double on L-shaped dinette; shower, portable cassette wc; solid fuel stove, gas central heating; gas cooking, 12V fridge. Built 2003.

Peak Forest, Derbys - £27,950

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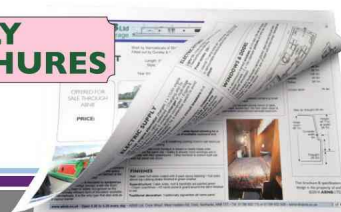


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MARCH

Until 6 Mar Yorks: Bingley Three Rise Showcase, daily 10am-3pm canalrivertrust.org.uk

Until 27 Mar London: Exhibition on the Hertford Union Canal, London Canal Museum canalmuseum.org.uk

2 Wed Cheshire: The story of John Fletcher of Chester, 8pm at Chester Boughton Hall Cricket Club, Boughton Hall Avenue, Boughton 01244 66585

2 Wed Derbys: James Brindley: His life, his last canal and its unique boats, 7.30pm at the Winding Wheel, 13 Hollywell St, Chesterfield, book on 01246 345222

2 Wed, 9 Wed, 16 Wed, 23 Wed & 12 Sat Suffolk: Work party on the River Gipping 01394 380765 restoration@rivergippingtrust.org.uk

3 Thu London: The Glamorganshire Canal, 7.30pm at the London Canal Museum canalmuseum.org.uk

5 Sat Wilts: IWA branch AGM and walk, 10.30am-5pm at The Swan Hotel, 1 Church Street, Bradford-on-Avon 0117 962 3812 geoff.harman@waterways.org.uk

5 Sat & 22 Tue Staffs: Work party at Middleport 07976 805858 steve.wood@waterways.org.uk

5-6 Cheshire: Model Boat Show at the National Waterways Museum canalrivertrust.co.uk

5-6 Cheshire: Roses & Castles workshop 01270 811330 jane@day-star-theatre.co.uk

5-6 & 12-13 6-7, 13-14, 20-21 & 27-28 London: Joey's Fireworks at the Puppet Barge puppetbarge.com

6 Sun Yorks: Open day at Fall Ings Lock, 10am-4pm canalrivertrust.org.uk

6 Sun Sussex: Mothering Sunday boat trips from

Loxwood book on weyandarun.co.uk

6 Sun Yorks: Mother's Day Tea and Boat trips at Standedge Tunnel book on 01484 844298

8 Tue Middx: The River Wey and Godalming Navigation, 7.30pm at Hillingdon Canal Club, Waterloo Road, Uxbridge Middlesex.socials@waterways.org.uk

8 Tue Northants: IWA branch AGM, 8pm at The Walnut Tree, 21 Station Road, Blisworth sandie.morton@waterways.org.uk

8 Tue Cheshire: CRT in the North West, and IWA branch AGM, 7.45pm Holiday Inn, Lower Mersey Street, Ellesmere Port

9 Wed, 22 Tue, 24 Thu, 28 Mon, 29 Tue & 31 Thu Derbys: Cruises from Tapton Lock chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

9 Wed W Mids: Work party on the Staffs & Worcs, location tba, 07976 746225 david.struckett@waterways.org.uk

9 Wed Warwicks: Marketing and the IWA Brand, 7.30pm at Sports Connexion, Leamington Road, Ryton on Dunsmore, Coventry info.warwickshire@waterways.org.uk

9 Wed London: IWA branch AGM, 7.30pm at United Reformed Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon

10 Thu Leics: The Chesterfield Canal, 7.30 at The Gate Hangs Well, Syston 07710 362 952 andrewshephard1946@gmail.com

10 Thu Notts: IWA branch AGM and talk, 7.45pm at The Poppy and Pint, Pierrepont Road, West Bridgford archie.roberts@waterways.org.uk

10 Thu Staffs: Work party at Denstone 07743 628091 robert.frost@waterways.org.uk

12 Sat Warwicks: WRG Barn Dance, book in advance on 01494 783453 ext 610

12 Sat London: Disabled

Access Day at the London Canal Museum

12-13 & 23 Wed Worcs: Work party at Tardebigge 024 76 726 924 volunteers@wbdc.org.uk

13 Sun Yorks: Wedding Fayre at Standedge Tunnel canalrivertrust.org.uk

13 Sun Lincs: Work party on the Sleaford Navigation 01522 689460 workparties@sleafordnavigation.co.uk

13 Sun & 29 Tue Northants: Work party on the Northampton Arm geoff.wood@waterways.org.uk

13 Mar-9 Apr Cheshire: Canal Art Exhibition at Audlem Mill audlemmill.co.uk

16 Wed Staffs: IWA branch AGM and social evening, 7.15pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane, Lichfield 01889 583330 lichfield@waterways.org.uk

17 Thu Staffs: Work party at Church Lawton 0780 887317 john.brighthouse@waterways.org.uk

17 Thu Bucks: At Last We Head for Home, 7.45pm at Bletchley Royal British Legion, Melrose Avenue, West Bletchley 01908 376449

18 Fri Yorks: IWA branch AGM, 8pm at Methodist Church Hall, Cottingham 01482 845099

19 Sat Derbys: Cruise from Chesterfield chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

19 Sat Gtr Man: Work party in Greater Manchester 07710 554602 secretary@manchester-iwa.co.uk

20 Sun Notts: Easter Egg Hunt cruises from Retford chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

21 Mon W Mids: IWA branch AGM, 7.15pm at Coombeswood Canal Trust, Hawne Basin, Hereward Rise, Halesowen 01299 832 593

22 Tue Derbys: The Plague Doctor, 8pm at The Wilmot Arms, 49 Derby Road, Derby

23 Wed Bucks: IWA branch

AGM and CRT in the South East, 8pm at Little Chalfont Village Hall, Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont waterways.org.uk/chiltern

23 Wed & 30 Wed Derbys: Cruises from Hollingwood chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

25 Fri Cheshire: Work party at Congleton 07710 054848 bob.luscombe@waterways.org.uk

25-28 Cheshire: Easter Boat Gathering and Sea Shanty Festival at the National Waterways Museum canalrivertrust.org.uk

25 Mar-2 Apr Derbys: WRG Work Camp at Staveley Lock 01494 783 453 ext 604 jenny.black@waterways.org.uk

25-28 Sussex: Easter Bunny trips from Loxwood book on weyandarun.co.uk

25 Mar-31 Oct Lincs: Burnley's Canal Exhibition at the Weaver Triangle Visitor Centre, 2-4pm canalrivertrust.org.uk

26 Sat Notts: Cruises from Shireoaks chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

26 Sat Notts: Easter cruises from Hollingwood chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

26 Sat Cheshire: Work party in Chester 07795 617803 mike.carter@waterways.org.uk

26-27 Derbys: Buxworth Community Gala 07968148199 garymc@dmcdist.co.uk

27 Sun Derbys: Easter cruises from Chesterfield chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

27-28 Notts: Easter Bunny cruises from Worksop chesterfield-canal-trust.org.uk

31 Thu Lincs: 50 Years on the Cut, 7pm at St Andrew's Church Hall, Tulketh Rd, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston lancsandcumbria@waterways.org.uk

MARCH WALKS

6 Sun London: Mile End to

Limehouse, meet at 2.30pm at Mile End tube station 020 3612 9624

8 Tue Staffs: Walk along the Hatherton, meet at 1015am at the Village Hall, Catsbridge Lane, Four Crosses, Cannock 07866 201873 clive.walker@waterways.org.uk

19 Sat Staffs: The Chase Walk at Cannock Chase chasewalk.org

20 Sun London: Islington to Mile End, meet at 2.30pm at Angel tube station 020 3612 9624

27 Sun London: Walk along the Regent's, 10am at Angel Station regentsbowler@gmail.com

APRIL

2 Sat W Mids: BCN Spring Cruise boundarypost@gmail.com

2 Sat Berks: Big Slough canal clean-up emma.matthars@waterways.org.uk

2 Sat Staffs: Work party at Middleport 07976 805858 steve.wood@waterways.org.uk

2-3 Cheshire: Open day at Lock 63 on the Trent & Mersey, 10am-3pm canalrivertrust.org.uk

2-3 Warwicks: Work party at Stan Clover Lock in Luddington info.warwickshire@waterways.org.uk

2-3 Northants: Open day at White Mills Marina, Earls Barton, 10am-4pm whitemillsmarina.co.uk

2-9 Wilts: WRG Canal Camp at Weymoor Bridge waterways.org.uk/wrg

2-9 Staffs: WRG Canal Camp near Crumpwood waterways.org.uk/wrg

APRIL WALKS

3 Sun London: Little Venice to Camden, meet at 2.30pm at Warwick Avenue tube station 020 3612 9624 roger.wilkinson@waterways.org.uk

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Ian on his wooden narrowboat *Spey*

20 Questions



Ian McCarthy is a volunteer lock-keeper and now a representative on the Canal & River Trust Governing Council

1 What first attracted you to the waterways?

One of my Sunday school teachers took his class on his boat at the end of the summer term, if they had been good. In the summer of 1960, I had a day-trip from Brooklands to Northwich, and then came back on a steam train. It was fantastic, I was hooked.

2 Tell us about your boating experience...

In a fit of stupidity, my five friends and I bought a historic wooden canal boat in 1971, we are now replacing timbers we replaced 30-odd years ago.

3 What do the waterways have to offer the country?

They have a fantastic future as an integrated national park providing all sorts of leisure opportunities, as well as providing commercial green transport.

4 What do the waterways need most?

A secure future.

5 What attracted you to lock-keeping?

I had been made redundant in 2011, and British Waterways asked for lock-keepers on the Manchester 18. I've always liked the Rochdale, and I really believe more people should use it. So I thought that by becoming a volunteer I might be able to encourage more people to use this wonderful canal.

6 What's the best thing about volunteering?

At the end of the flight, when people say: "We thought it would take all day not half a day." You hope that they will pass on the message that it's not that hard, there are no boogie men, and that we volunteers are there to help, we just need asking.

7 And, is there anything you don't like?

Some people will not listen, they think: "I've been doing it (wrong) this way for many, many years, why should you know better, you're just a volunteer?" Well, I've been doing the Rochdale locks for 50-odd years now and I'm still listening and learning. I think some people could do with picking up a few tips, it would probably make their boating easier and more enjoyable.

8 Why do you feel it's important to volunteer?

Helping some people really does make a difference to their enjoyment. There is also no money to do non-essential maintenance, and volunteers are really good at that sort of thing.

9 What made you decide to stand for the Canal & River Trust Governing Council?

With due deference to my fellow candidates, I looked at their, manifestos and thought, 'I don't fancy voting for them, I could do as well as them.' So, at the last minute with very little planning, I put my name forwards.

10 What does being on the Council entail?

Technically our role is to select and police the Trustees, who legally run the Trust. The council formally meets twice a year. We can hire and fire the Trustees. I am hoping that we can expand this to include advising the Trustees, rather than just observing them, but that will require an alteration to the Article of the Trust.

11 Which is your favourite canal or waterway?

The Droitwich Barge Canal, I first started working on it, in the early 1970s and it is a lovely place. It was wonderful to take the boat to the opening rally in 2011. We had a super time in Droitwich that weekend.

12 Who would be your ideal cruising companion?

I would love to go boating again with my old friends Charlie Atkins or Johnny Jinks, both of whom I really miss.

13 Have you ever had the misfortune to fall in?

Yes, the last time being when I walked off the deck shafting *Spey* out of the basin, the Bridgewater is very deep and cold in Leigh. However, I have had to get in, to either clear the prop or the channel, far more times.

14 What did you want to be aged 12?

A crane driver.

15 What do you think of the people on the canals?

There are lots of really nice people out there. Unfortunately, there are also more and more people who have no understanding of the canals' culture, history or etiquette. What is worse is that there are some that just don't care.

16 What is your proudest achievement?

Getting the 100th Boat Rally in Manchester to happen and being presented with one of only three non-boating Rally plaques, for the voluntary efforts I had put in.

17 Where would your dream cruise be to?

"The Mucky Duck" to Droitwich via Ogley Locks, Wallsall, Brades Locks, Dudley Tunnel and the Delph 9 – but that may have to wait a while.

18 What are you reading at the moment?

By my bedside I have: *The History of The Oxford Canal* by Hugh J Compton, *Ellerbeck Camp 1947-1954* by Margaret Brenchley and *Mist over Pendle* by Robert Neil

19 Tell us about your spare time interests...

I part-own a historic wooden narrow boat – what spare time? However, I also like the arts and theatre and have supported the Mikron Theatre company for many years.

20 What superpower would you like to possess?

The ability to detect that someone is not telling the truth.



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